

CHAPTER 4

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

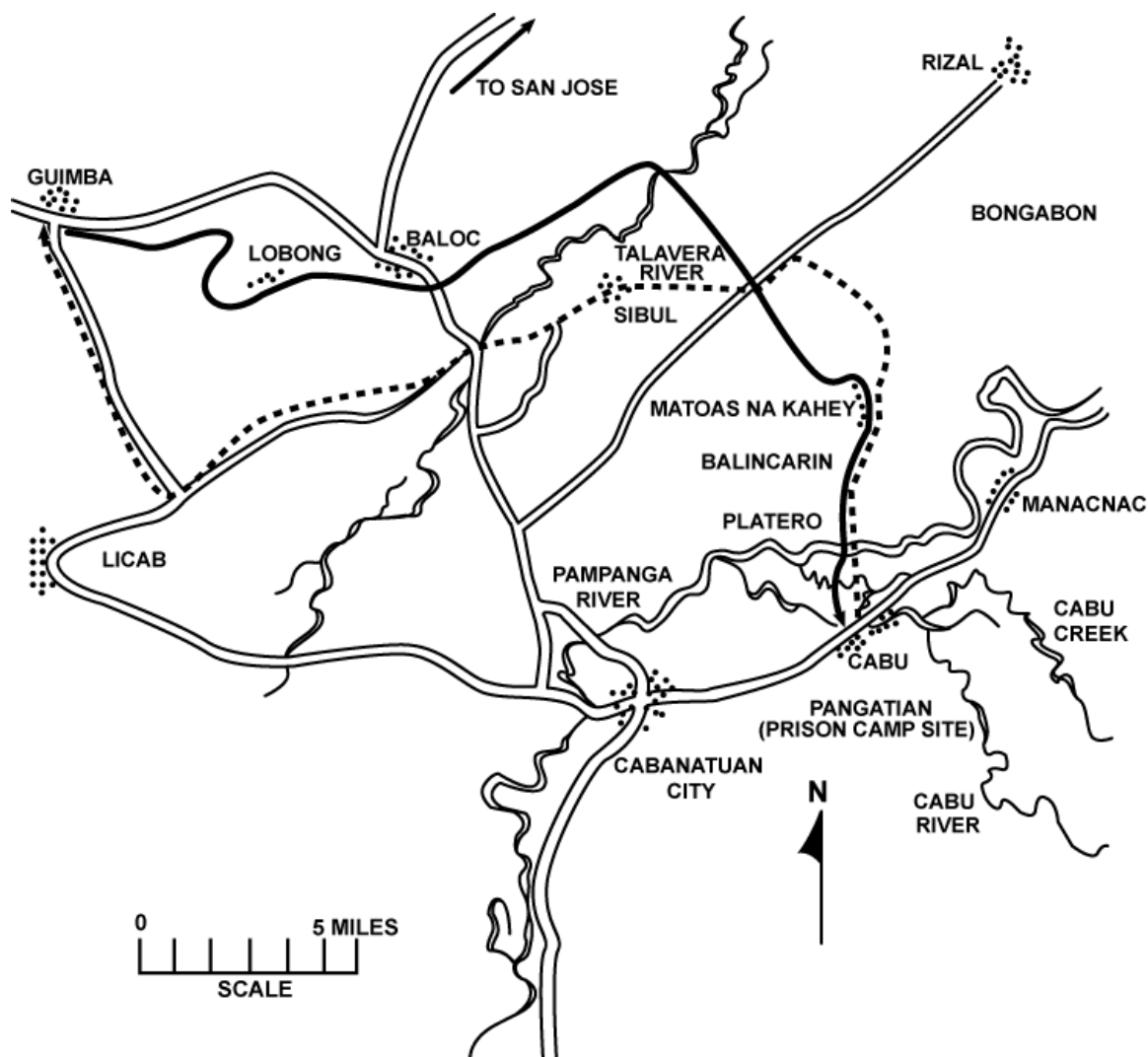
The attack must be violent and rapid to shock the enemy and to prevent his recovery until the defense has been destroyed. The attacker must minimize his exposure to enemy fires by using maneuver and counterfire, avoiding obstacles, maintaining security, ensuring command and control, and remaining organized for the fight on the objective.

FM 100-5, 1986

The infantry rifle company normally conducts offensive operations as part of a larger force. Offensive actions allow the CO to choose the time and place to engage in battle and to exploit the strengths of his company in the most effective manner. This requires the company to seize/retain the initiative. In the attack, the company maneuvers along lines of least resistance using the terrain for cover and concealment. This indirect approach affords the best chance to achieve surprise on the enemy force. Infiltration by small units through the enemy main defenses allows the infantry company to concentrate combat power against enemy weak points. Once the position of advantage is achieved, the infantry company conducts a rapid and violent assault, normally under the cover of darkness, to accomplish its mission. An excellent example of an infantry company attack occurred in the Philippines during World War II.

In January 1945, as the Sixth Army was advancing across the island of Luzon, the 6th Ranger Battalion was tasked to conduct a raid behind enemy lines to liberate more than 500 allied POWs from a camp near the town of Pangatian. The battalion commander, realizing that a smaller force had the best chance of achieving surprise, decided to use only a reinforced rifle company to conduct this raid. He selected C company and one platoon from F company. The total strength of the force was 128 personnel, but they would receive additional support from several local guerrilla units.

The initial focus was on gathering the intelligence that was critical to the success of this mission. Aerial and ground reconnaissance provided this information, and the camp was placed under surveillance days before the raid. The first phase of the operation was a 14-mile infiltration through enemy forces to a town 5 miles north of the camp. This was successfully completed the night of 28 January, and the company linked up with the guerrillas that had the camp under surveillance.



Infiltration/exfiltration routes.

These guerrillas stated there was heavy movement of enemy soldiers and tanks all around the camp due to the enemy's continued withdrawal from the Sixth Army. The decision was made to postpone the raid for 24 hours to conduct detailed reconnaissance of the objective area. This resulted in the location of an enemy division near Cabanatuan City and also 200-300 soldiers bivouacked on Cabu Creek just east of the camp. This was in addition to the 250 enemy soldiers who were known to be inside the camp. With this information, the plan was completed.

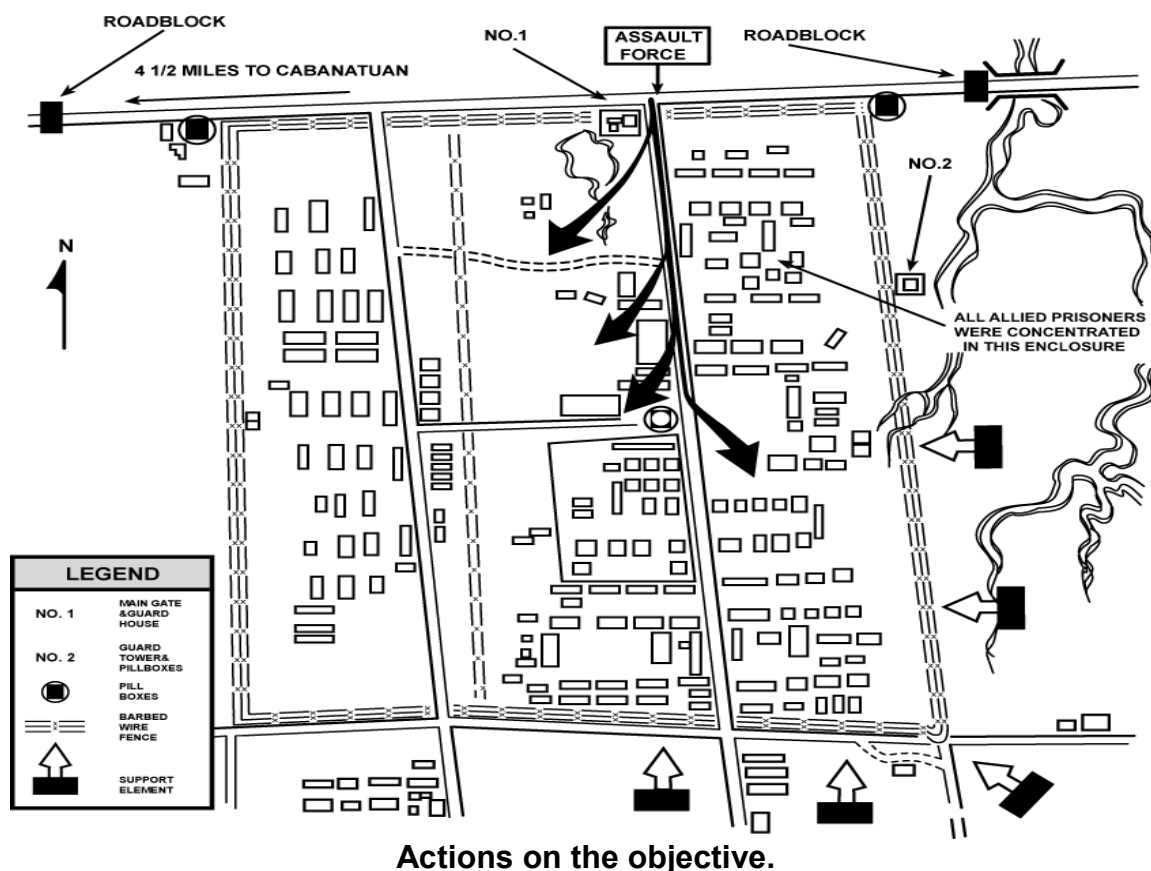
The plan was to initiate the raid at dusk on 30 January. The objective would be isolated by roadblocks on the main highway to prevent reinforcements from the east or west. A support element would destroy the enemy guard towers and pill boxes while the assault force penetrated through the main gate to neutralize all the enemy within the camp and to bring out the POWs. More than 50 handcarts were provided by local civilians to evacuate the POWs that were unable to walk.

At 1945 hours, all the units were in position and the assault was initiated by the support element engaging the guard positions. The assault force stormed the camp and within 12 minutes the camp was secured and the evacuation of the POWs begun. The

enemy east of the camp had reacted almost immediately and a fierce fight was taking place at the roadblock on the Cabu Creek, but the enemy was unable to get through this position. By 2015 hours, all the POWs were out of the camp and moving in a long convoy towards the north. There were two Rangers killed in the action at the camp, and only one POW had died (of an apparent heart attack).

The evacuation convoy moved as rapidly as possible towards friendly lines. By 1100 hours on 31 January, they had successfully exfiltrated 19 miles back to the forward elements of Sixth Army. Five hundred and twelve allied POWs were liberated as a result of this operation and more than 400 enemy killed. Friendly losses were 2 KIA, 2 WIA, and 27 guerrillas listed as dead or missing.

This attack was successful because the CO effectively applied the fundamentals for an attack. The infantry rifle company CO must also apply these fundamentals today. The audacity and aggressiveness displayed by F Company, 6th Ranger Battalion must also be present in our attacks today. The success of this attack began with the detailed preparations. Using the night and an indirect approach to get to the decisive point are essential to the success of today's infantry units as well. The violent concentration of combat power initiated with surprise and delivered with speed resulted in the rapid seizure of the camp. A simple concept that is clearly understood by all, based on the results of an effective reconnaissance, and executed with speed and violence are still the keys to winning the close fight.



Section I. OFFENSIVE FUNDAMENTALS

The infantry rifle company is best suited for night offensive operations. It is most effective attacking at night to destroy enemy C2, CS, and CSS assets. When required to fight the enemy's combat forces, the rifle company must achieve surprise and use the indirect approach to get to the decisive point. For sustained operations or when required to fight an enemy with a significant firepower/mobility advantage, the infantry company generally requires augmentation with CS and CSS assets.

4-1. PURPOSE

Offensive operations are conducted for varied purposes. Some of these are—

- To destroy enemy personnel, equipment, and resources.
- To seize or secure key or decisive terrain.
- To gain information.
- To deceive and divert the enemy.
- To hold the enemy in position.
- To disrupt an enemy attack.

a. The attacker must have superior combat power at the decisive point to overcome the enemy defense. Economy of force must be used at other locations to achieve concentration of combat power at the decisive point. Once the attack is successful, the enemy must be pressed relentlessly to keep him off balance.

b. Attacks should avoid the enemy's strengths. The goal of the commander should be to strike the enemy with an overwhelming concentration of combat power from an unexpected direction when he least expects it.

4-2. CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

All successful offensive operations use surprise, concentration, speed, flexibility, and audacity. The CO decides how they are applied for each mission.

a. **Surprise.** Units achieve surprise by striking the enemy at a time, at a place, or in a manner for which he is unprepared. Total surprise is rarely essential, simply delaying or disrupting the enemy's reaction is usually effective.

(1) Surprise delays his reactions, stresses his command and control, and induces psychological shock in soldiers and leaders. This may allow an attacker to succeed with fewer forces than he might otherwise require.

(2) The rifle company's ability to attack during limited visibility, to operate in small units, and to infiltrate, are often key to achieving surprise. The company must exploit the effect of surprise on the enemy before he can recover.

b. **Speed.** Speed promotes surprise, keeps the enemy off balance, contributes to the security of the attacking force, and prevents the defender from taking effective countermeasures.

(1) Properly exploited, speed confuses and immobilizes the defender until the attack becomes unstoppable. It is built into operations through careful planning.

(2) The rifle company increases its speed in the attack by using simple plans, decentralized control, and mission orders. Speed of movement depends on reconnaissance, reducing the soldiers' loads, using proper movement formations and techniques, and selecting good routes. Speed in planning results from effective SOPs, capable leaders, and the proper use of time.

c. **Concentration.** The attacker concentrates combat power at decisive points and times to achieve decisive results. Leaders strive to concentrate the effects of their combat power while maintaining their dispersion in small units.

(1) Because the attacker is often moving across terrain the enemy has prepared, he may be exposing himself to the enemy's fires. By concentrating overwhelming combat power, he can reduce both the effectiveness of the enemy fires and the amount of time he is exposed to these fires.

(2) The challenge for the CO is to concentrate combat power while reducing the enemy's ability to do the same against his unit. Actions that cause the enemy to shift combat potential away from the decisive point result in a greater advantage in combat power there.

d. **Flexibility.** At some point in most attacks, the original plan must be adjusted to meet the changes in the situation. Mission orders and competent subordinate leaders with initiative will ensure the proper adjustments are made.

(1) The commander must expect uncertainties and be ready to exploit opportunities. The flexibility required often depends on the amount of reliable intelligence on the enemy.

(2) The CO builds flexibility into his plan during his estimate. By conducting a thorough war-game process, he develops a full appreciation for possible enemy actions. A reserve increases the CO's flexibility.

e. **Audacity.** Audacity is the willingness to risk bold action to achieve positive results. The audacious commander develops confidence by conducting a thorough estimate. His actions, although quick and decisive, are based on a reasoned approach to the tactical situation and on his knowledge of his soldiers, the enemy, and the terrain. He is daring and original—he is not rash!

(1) Audacious commanders throughout history have used the "indirect approach". They maneuver to maintain a position of advantage over the enemy, seek to attack the enemy on the flank or rear, and exploit success at once, even if this briefly exposes flanks.

(2) Boldness and calculated risk have always been the keystones of successful offensive operations. They must, however, be consistent with the higher commander's mission and intent.

4-3. PHASES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

All offensive operations tend to occur in phases, although the length and nature of each phase varies. The general phases of offensive operations are preparation, attack, exploitation, and pursuit.

a. **Preparation.** Companies prepare for the offense by using troop-leading procedures. These include planning and issuing orders, preparing personnel and equipment, conducting reconnaissance, and rehearsing.

b. **Attack.** Companies normally attack as part of a larger force. The attack phase may include either a hasty or a deliberate attack. Most attacks by the company consist of an approach to the objective, the assault or actions on the objective, and the reorganization/consolidation.

c. **Exploitation.** A company normally takes part in exploitations as part of a larger force; however, the company should exploit tactical success at the local level within the higher commanders' concept of the operation.

d. **Pursuit.** The objective of the pursuit phase of an operation is the total destruction of the enemy force. The company may take part in a pursuit as part of a larger force.

4-4. OFFENSIVE FRAMEWORK

A simple, complete concept of operation is the basis of all tactical offensive operations. All company offensive operations consist of R&S activities, a main attack with supporting attacks, and sometimes, reserve operations. Companies may conduct any of these operations as part of the battalion mission.

a. **Reconnaissance and Security.** Before an attack can begin, the enemy must be found. This includes locating flanks, gaps, weaknesses, and obstacles in his position or formation. At the same time, friendly forces must be protected from surprise and yet still be able to rapidly deploy when contact is made with the enemy.

(1) Reconnaissance is done to obtain information about the enemy or the terrain. The company's reconnaissance is focused on collecting information that is critical to the attack. These requirements may be directed by the battalion or the CO.

(2) Security is the use of protective measures to prevent enemy observation or fires on the company. All platoons/sections are responsible for their own local security. They may also be given specific security tasks as part of the company R&S plan.

(3) Companies, platoons, and squads conduct patrols, establish OPs, and move using appropriate movement formations and techniques to accomplish both reconnaissance and security tasks. Commanders and subordinates must clearly understand what they are to accomplish. In some cases, they will only observe and report; while in others, they will also be required to fight.

b. **Attacks.** Closing with the enemy by maneuver to destroy or capture him is an attack. This is the primary task of the infantry in warfare. The company may be designated the main or supporting attack within a battalion. It also designates its own main and supporting attacks.

(1) The main attack accomplishes the mission. A platoon is the main attack for a company if the platoon's attack will accomplish the company mission.

(2) A platoon supporting attack helps the main attack succeed. Supporting attacks are used to suppress, deceive, fix, or isolate enemy units; to seize terrain that is key to the company's mission; or to protect the main attack from enemy counterattacks. A follow and support force is also a supporting attack. It is a committed force, not a reserve, that is assigned specific missions in support of the main attack. These may include: destroy by-passed units/positions; reduce obstacles; secure lines of communications; secure key areas/facilities; provide EPW search teams, demolition teams, first-aid and litter teams, and ammunition resupply.

(3) The main effort is the focus of combat power at any given time during the attack. Both the main attack and main effort are mechanisms for concentrating and coordinating combat power, but they are not synonymous. For example, the company concept for seizing an enemy strongpoint has 1st Platoon supporting by fire (a supporting attack), 2d Platoon conducting a breach and seizing a foothold (a supporting attack), and 3d Platoon seizing the decisive point on the strongpoint (the enemy CP). The 3d Platoon has the

decisive action that accomplishes the company's mission. They are the main attack throughout the operation; however, 3d Platoon's success depends on 2d Platoon's success. When 2d Platoon is conducting the breach, this is the most critical action; they should be designated the initial main effort (Figure 4-1). 1st Platoon initially supports 2d Platoon's breach, but upon commitment of 3d Platoon, they support the main attack.

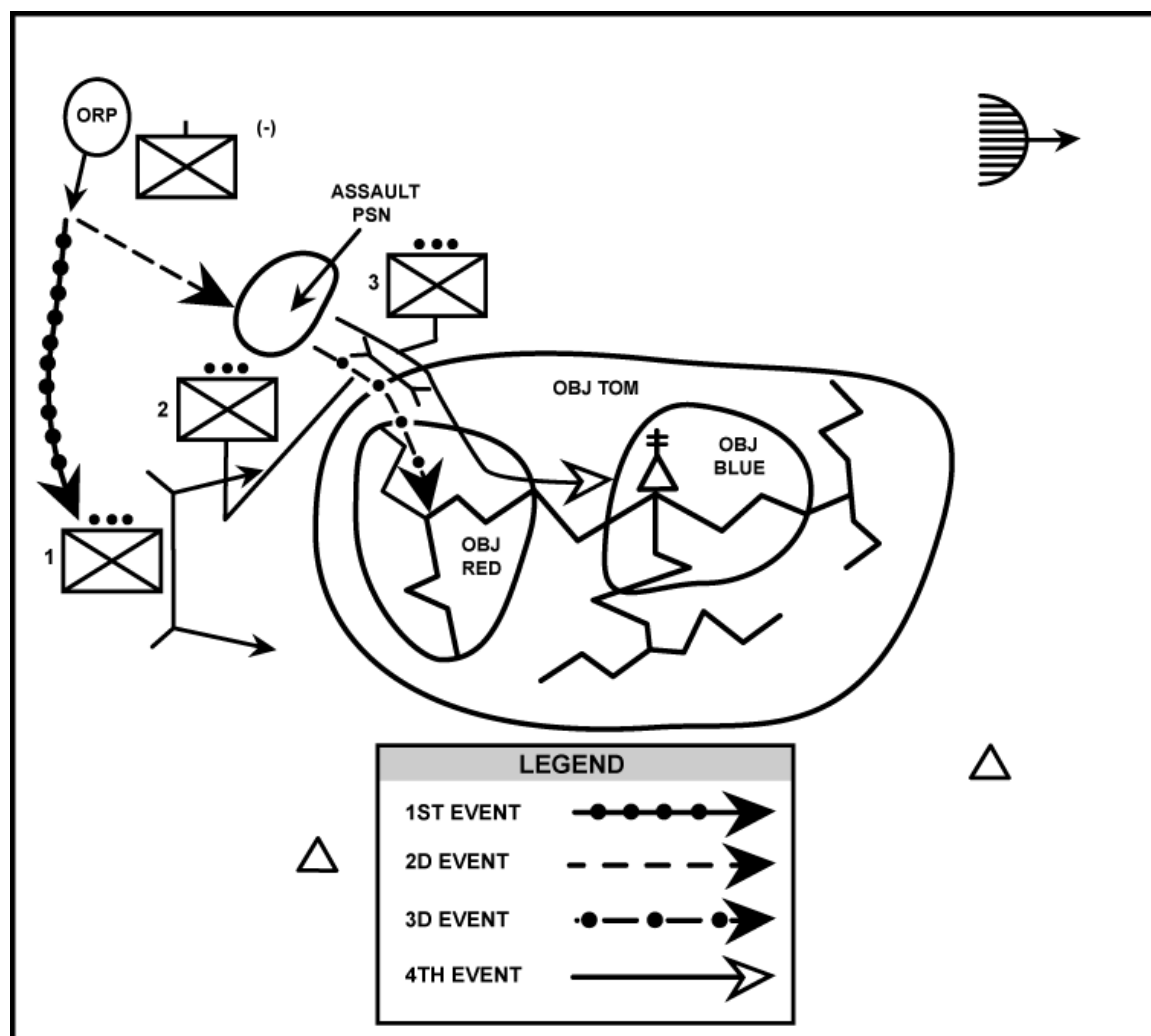


Figure 4-1. Main attack concept sketch.

c. **Reserves.** In the offense, they are positioned to weight the main effort. They exploit success, reinforce or maintain momentum, deal with enemy counterattacks, or provide security.

(1) The reserve is committed at a decisive point in the battle to ensure success of the mission or to capitalize on opportunities generated by the successful attack. Reserves must be readily available; they provide flexibility to the plan. When a designated reserve is not possible, the CO provides flexibility by other means such as be-prepared missions or additional security/reconnaissance tasks for committed platoons. Control measures that support rapid issuance of FRAGOs also provide flexibility to the plan.

(2) A unit held in reserve is not committed to a specific mission. The reserve leader is given planning guidance. For example: "In priority, be prepared to continue the main attack; be prepared to begin a movement to contact immediately after the main attack succeeds to maintain contact with the enemy; be prepared to block a counterattack along avenue of approach 2, coming from the west to prevent disruption of the main attack." The leader prepares for each mission in this order. These be-prepared missions may not be required to accomplish the company's mission. The reserve leader should also be given the criteria the CO will use to initiate each be-prepared mission.

(3) The size of the reserve and the headquarters that controls it depends upon the commander's estimate of the situation. Usually, the more vague the enemy situation, the larger the reserve. If a company is the main attack and the battalion has a reserve, then a small reserve or none at all may be designated. However, if the company is a supporting attack, a large reserve may be needed. When the reserve does not include a platoon headquarters, the XO or 1SG may be the reserve leader. The leaders of the reserve must understand their be-prepared missions; they must keep up with the current situation; and they must keep their unit ready for action on short notice.

4-5. FORMS OF MANEUVER

The positional relationships of opposing forces to one another are described as forms of maneuver. The five forms of maneuver are penetration, envelopment, turning movement, frontal attack, and infiltration. These are discussed in greater detail in FM 7-20. In every attack, the CO must determine how to maneuver his unit to get overwhelming combat power at the decisive point. He applies these basic forms of maneuver, individually or in combination, to do this. Reconnaissance is the key to selecting the proper form of maneuver. Once the maneuver is initiated, surprise, speed, and stealth are crucial to the unit's security and to prevent the enemy from effectively countering.

a. Penetration.

(1) Penetration is used when enemy flanks are not assailable and when time does not permit some other form of maneuver. Its purpose is to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front and thereby create both assailable flanks and access to the enemy's rear (Figure 4-2).

(2) The rifle company normally conducts a penetration as part of a larger force. Penetration may be tried at one or several points, depending on the forces available. However, a company will usually focus combat power at one breach point.

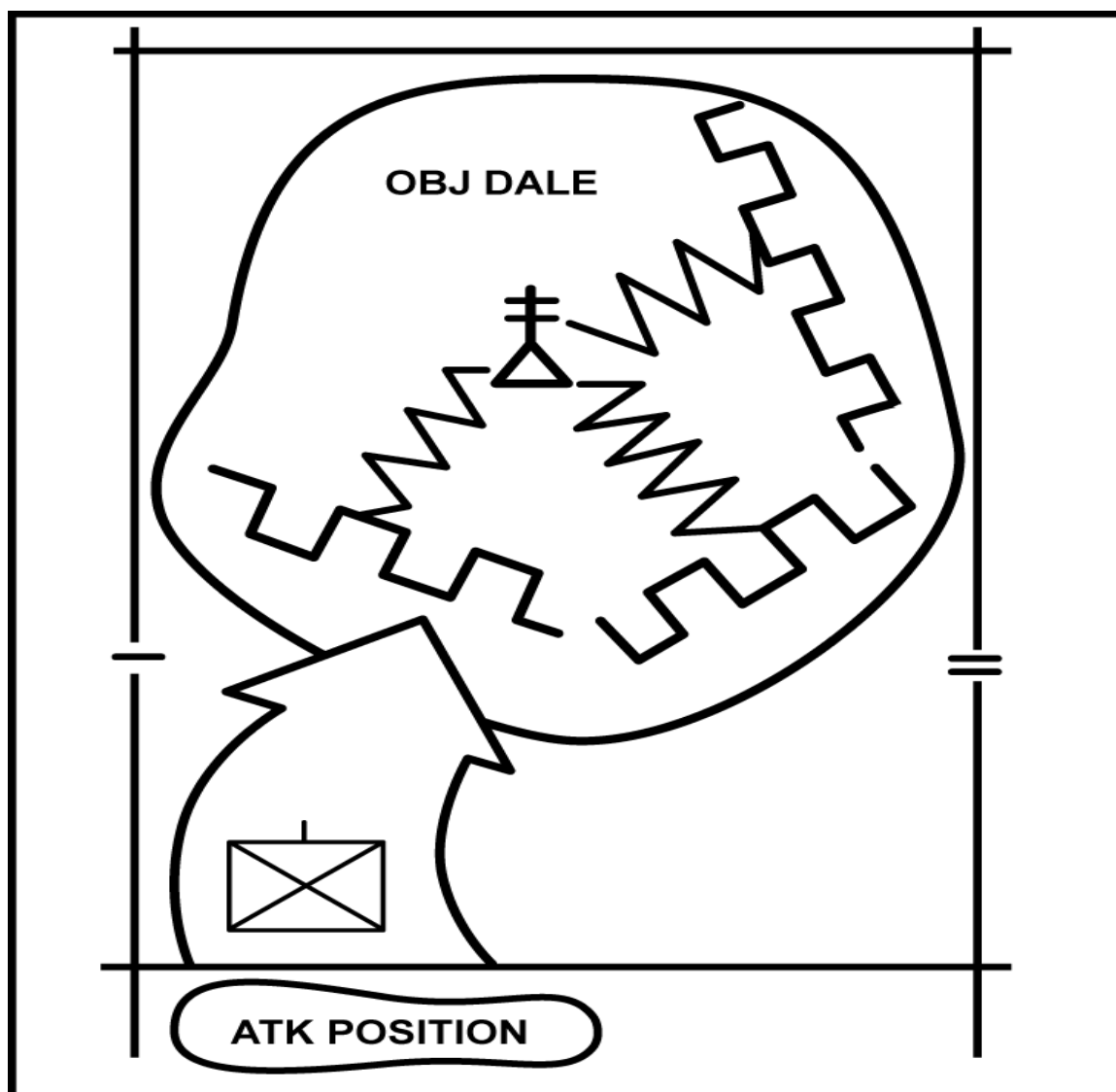


Figure 4-2. Penetration.

b. **Envelopment.**

(1) Envelopment avoids the enemy's front where his forces are more protected and his fires more easily concentrated. Instead, while fixing the defender's attention forward by supporting attacks, the attacker maneuvers his main effort to strike at his flanks and rear. Flank attacks are a variant of the envelopment in which access to the enemy's flank and rear results from the enemy's movement (Figure 4-3).

(2) Successful envelopment requires discovery or creation of an assailable flank. In meeting engagements and counterattacks, this may actually be the flank of the enemy force. In less fluid conditions, it may be a gap or weak point in the enemy's defense.

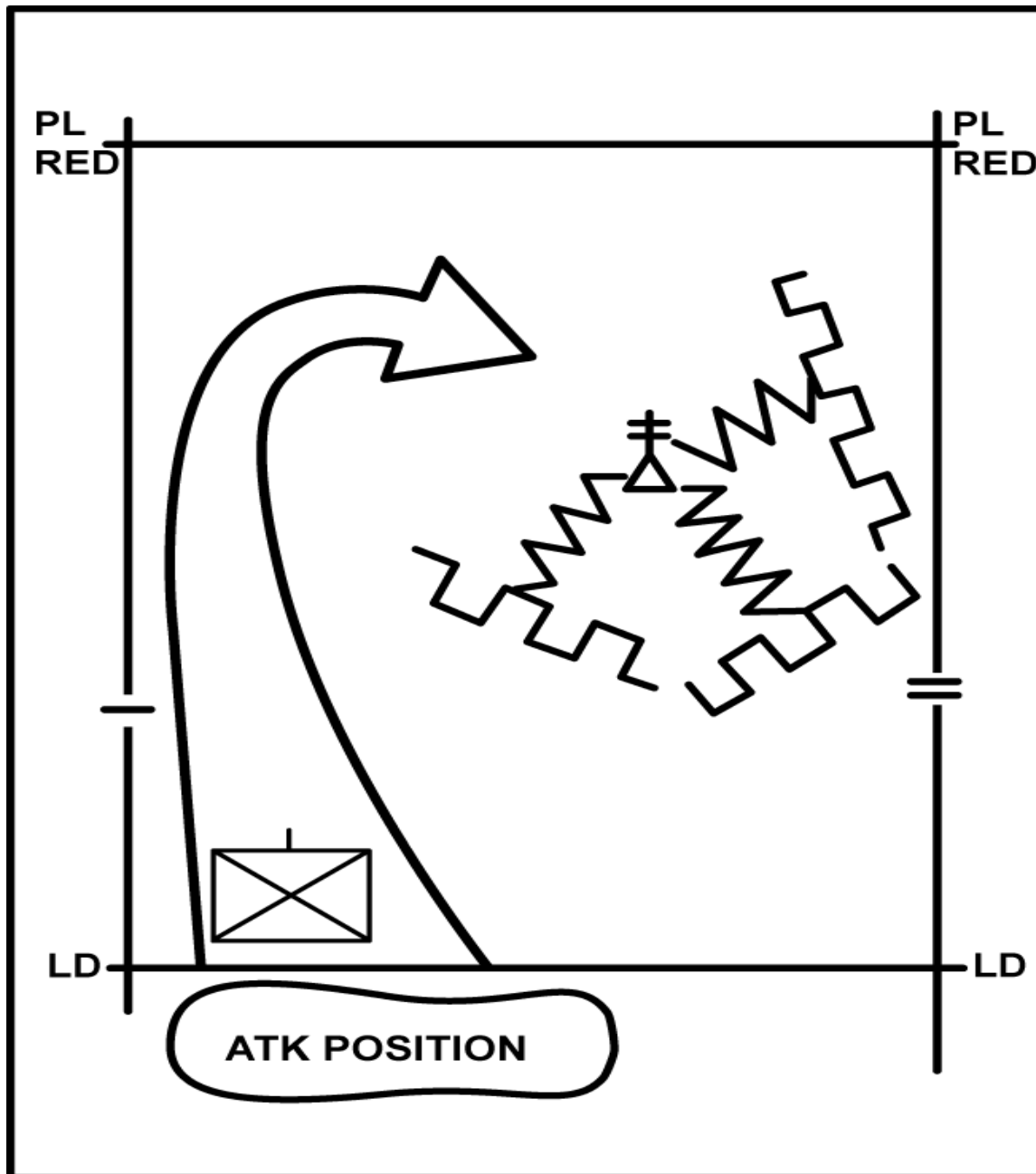


Figure 4-3. Envelopment.

c. Turning Movement.

(1) The turning movement is a type of envelopment in which the attacker attempts to avoid the defense entirely. Instead, he seeks to secure key terrain deep in the enemy rear and along his lines of communication. Faced with a major threat to his rear, the enemy is thus "turned" out of his defensive positions and forced to attack rearward.

(2) For a turning movement to be successful, the unit trying to turn the enemy must attack something that the enemy will fight to save. For some, it is their supply routes; for others, it may be artillery emplacements or a headquarters. In addition to attacking a decisive target, the turning unit must be strong enough to pose a real threat to the enemy (Figure 4-4). A company will never be able to turn a corps, but it may turn a battalion.

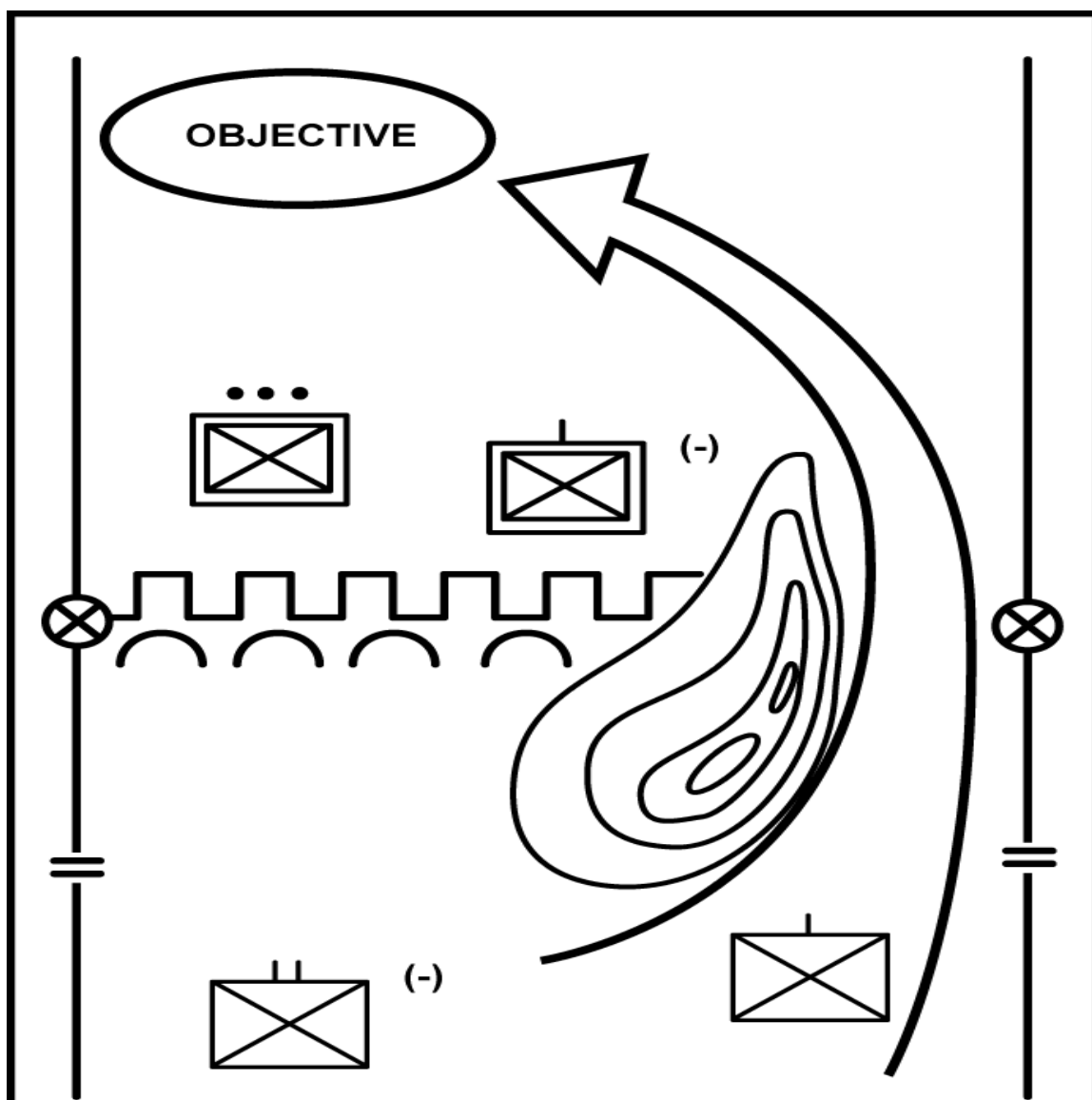


Figure 4-4. Turning movement.

d. Frontal Attack.

(1) A frontal attack strikes the enemy across a wide front and over the most direct approaches. For deliberate attacks, it is the least desirable form of maneuver since it exposes the attacker to the concentrated fire of the defender while at the same time limiting the effectiveness of the attacker's own fires.

(2) As the simplest form of maneuver, however, the frontal attack is useful for overwhelming weak defenses, security outposts, or disorganized enemy forces. It is often the best form of maneuver for an attack or meeting engagement in which speed and simplicity are key.

e. Infiltration.

(1) Infiltration is a means of reaching the enemy's rear without fighting through prepared defenses (Figure 4-5). It is the covert movement of all or part of the attacking force through enemy lines to a favorable position in their rear. The infiltrating unit avoids detection and engagement.

(2) Infantry companies are well suited for infiltrations. Their lack of protection and small signature when moving also make infiltrations an effective form of maneuver.

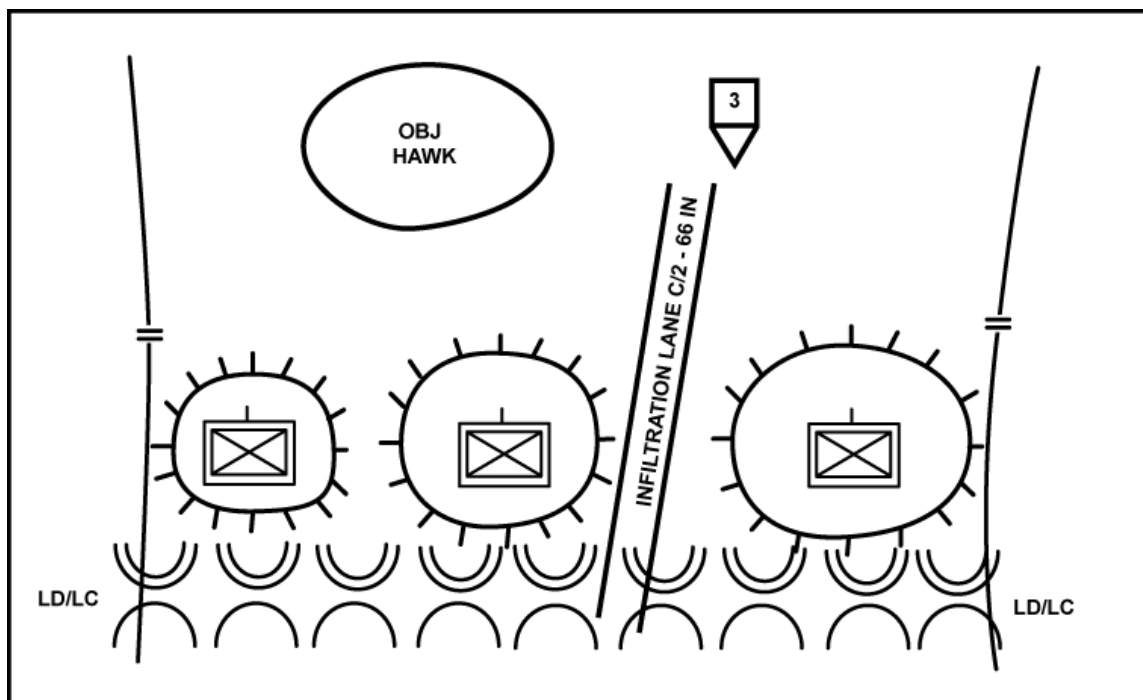


Figure 4-5. Infiltration.

Section II. INFILTRATION

Infiltration is a form of maneuver used by infantry units in many situations. During an attack, strong enemy defensive positions may be encountered. To avoid the enemy's strength, the commander may move units by stealth through gaps or around the enemy positions to conduct operations in the enemy's rear area. The company may infiltrate to conduct raids, ambushes, or other attacks. Infiltrations may also be used for many other types of operations, such as stay-behind and reconnaissance.

4-6. FUNDAMENTALS

Infiltration allows the infantry to exploit its capabilities. By infiltrating, the company can maneuver undetected by squad/platoons to critical targets, can achieve surprise, and can avoid the effects of enemy fires. Limited visibility, bad weather, and restrictive terrain reduce the chances of detection during an infiltration.

a. A unit may infiltrate—

- To gather information.
- To attack the enemy at a weak point.
- To seize key terrain or destroy vital installations behind enemy positions.
- To harass and disrupt the enemy with ambushes in his rear area; or to attack enemy reserves, fire support units, and command posts.

b. The phases of an infiltration are as follows:

- (1) *Patrol*. Find gaps/weak areas in the enemy defense and locate enemy positions.
- (2) *Prepare*. Conduct troop-leading procedures.
- (3) *Infiltrate*. Avoid enemy contact; move by smallest units possible.
- (4) *Consolidate*. Link up and prepare for actions at the objective.
- (5) *Execute*. Complete the mission.

c. Infiltrations do not always require that all units move through the enemy's positions without detection/fighting. Depending on the mission, the company can still complete the mission even though some of the squads made contact en route to the linkup point. Although the enemy may have some idea of what is taking place, it will be very difficult to estimate exactly what these small contacts mean. OPSEC may require that only key leaders have the entire plan during the infiltration phase to prevent disclosure due to casualties or friendly prisoners.

4-7. CONSIDERATIONS

An infiltration plan must be prepared. Units must be given enough time for preparation and movement. The company may infiltrate by itself or as part of the battalion. In either case, movement techniques and formations are based on the likelihood of enemy contact, the terrain, the visibility, and the need for speed and control.

a. **Size.** The size of the infiltrating unit depends on the amount of time available, the amount of cover and concealment, and the enemy. Other considerations may include the need to communicate, the difficulty of navigation, and the number of infiltration routes. Generally, smaller units can move quicker and make better use of available concealment. This may increase the number of linkups, requiring more time. Infiltrating by company or platoons ensures control and provides more combat power in the event of contact.

b. **Infiltration Lane.** The company may be assigned an infiltration lane or a zone. The CO must decide whether to move the entire company together through the company's lane or to assign each platoon a separate infiltration lane within the company lane. He also has the option to stagger the start time for each platoon on the one company lane. The infiltration lane should be wide enough to allow the infiltrating units to change their planned routes to avoid enemy contact.

(1) If the company uses a single company lane, the CO picks a route through it and an ORP (Figure 4-6). If multiple lanes are used, the CO assigns each platoon a lane and a start time, picks linkup points for the platoons, and picks a company ORP. The platoon leaders pick the routes through their lanes.

(2) In making his decision whether to use single or multiple lanes, the CO considers several things. Moving as a company on a single lane—

- May get the company to the ORP faster.
- Makes control easier.
- Makes navigation easier.
- Increases the chance of the entire company being detected.
- Provides greater combat potential if detected.

(3) Moving on multiple lanes (Figure 4-7) or by platoons on one lane—

- Requires linkups.
- Makes control harder.
- May make navigation more difficult.
- Decreases the chance of the entire company being detected. However, if detected there is less combat potential available.

c. **Routes.** The routes selected must—

- Avoid enemy positions.
- Have cover and concealment.
- Ease control and navigation.
- Avoid obstacles and danger areas.

(1) Routes should be reconnoitered without alerting the enemy. This may be possible by map reconnaissance only; however, consider using guides or marking the routes.

(2) Rally points may be selected based on a map reconnaissance; others are selected as the company moves along the route. If the infiltrating company is dispersed by enemy action, it rallies at the last rally point passed that is not within enemy small-arms range or impact area. The assembled unit then waits until a set number of units (soldiers) arrive at the rally point, or for a specified time, before continuing the mission. The senior man at the rally point should, in the absence of the CO, take charge and decide how to best continue the mission.

(3) Locate the ORP as close to the objective as possible without being detected or losing security. It should be large enough so that the company can deploy in it. It should be secured before it is occupied.

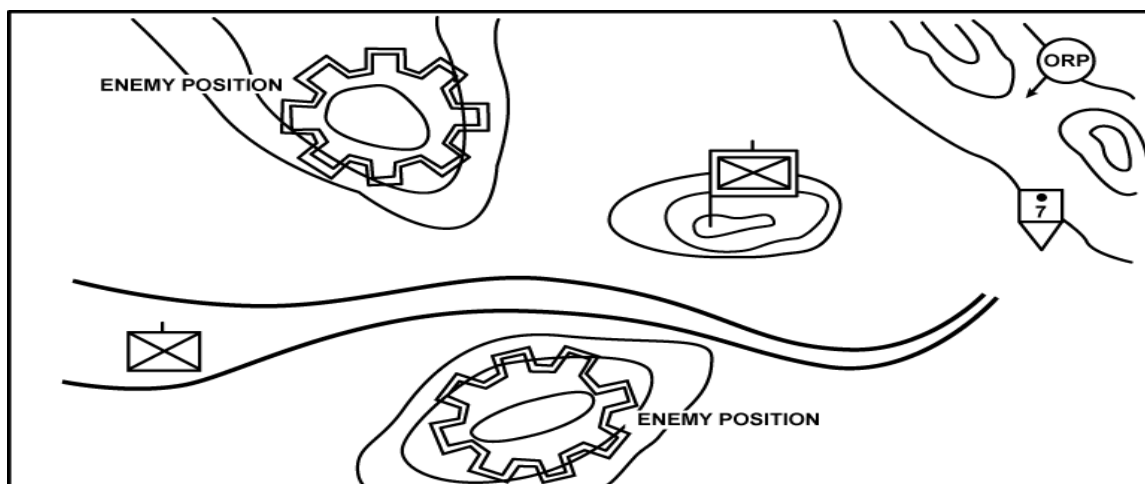


Figure 4-6. Company moving on a single infiltration lane.

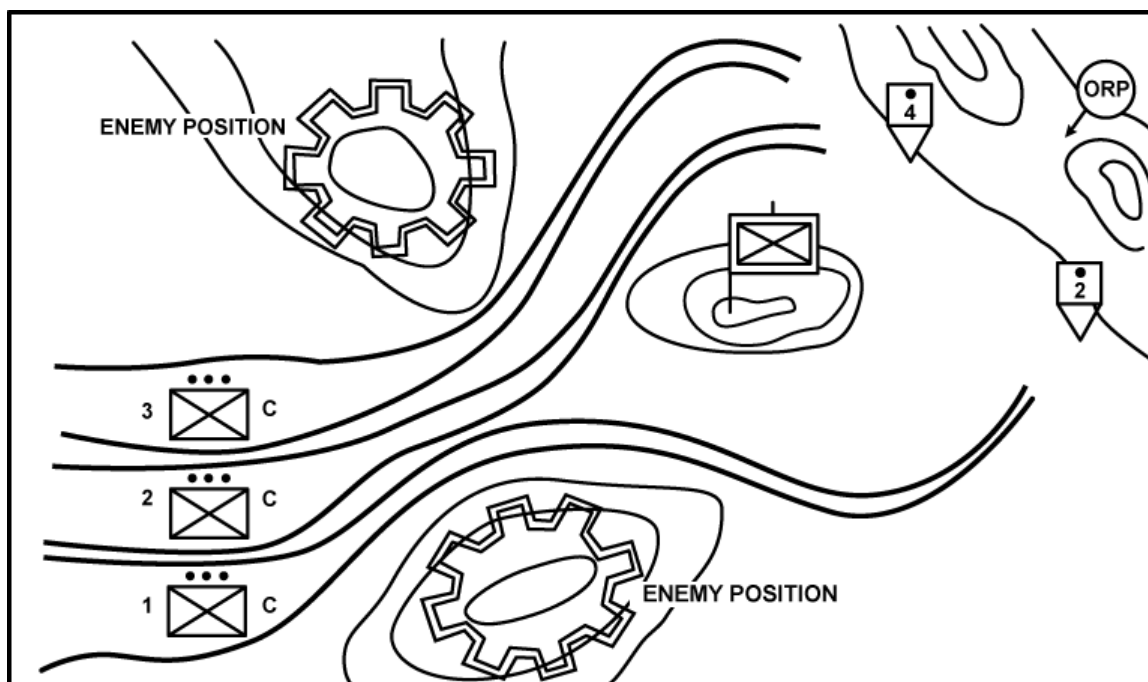


Figure 4-7. Company moving on multiple infiltration lanes.

d. **Linkup Point.** When multiple lanes are used, the platoons meet at a linkup point and then move as a company to the ORP. Do not plan linkups at the ORP. If a unit misses its linkup, it moves to a contingency linkup point located away from the ORP and links up with a small element from the ORP. Chapter 6, Section IV discusses linkups.

e. **Signals.** Visual signals, such as arm-and-hand signals, infrared devices, and flashlights with colored lenses, reduce the chance of detection. Avoid sound signals and flares. Recognition signals are critical for actions at a linkup point or a rally point.

(1) Radio listening silence should be enforced, except when it is necessary to report the progress of the unit or when a unit detected by the enemy needs supporting fire.

(2) Radio messages to report crossing of phase lines or checkpoints (if required) should be brief—one code word. They may be transmitted without using call signs to identify units, providing each unit has separate code words.

(3) When required, units operating out of radio contact (because of terrain or distances) can be required to monitor or send codes only at a certain time. At these times, they move to terrain or set up expedient antennas so they can communicate.

f. **Fire Support.** Indirect fires are always planned but only used when contact is made or when needed to support the mission. If contact is made with an enemy element, the infiltrating unit should use indirect fire to divert the enemy's attention, suppress enemy positions, and screen friendly movement to help them disengage. Indirect fires may also be used to assist in navigation and to cause the enemy soldiers on security to seek cover.

g. **Actions on Contact.** When infiltrating on multiple lanes, detection of one infiltrating unit may alert the enemy and compromise the other infiltrating units. The OPORD must state whether to continue the mission or return to friendly lines if detected by the enemy. Units following on the same lane should switch to an alternate lane. If a soldier in the unit speaks the enemy's language, he should be positioned at or near the

front of the column in case the unit is challenged by an enemy OP or patrol. The order must also specify what to do in the event of casualties.

h. **Methods of Handling Casualties and Prisoners.** During the infiltration, it may be hard to evacuate casualties without jeopardizing security. Casualties can be carried to the ORP or linkup point and evacuated when the operation has ended or concealed and left to be picked up later. Moving the wounded, dead, or prisoners to the ORP is dangerous when trying to avoid detection. If casualties are left, soldiers with medical supplies are left with them. The KIA can be concealed and recovered later. Leave prisoners under guard at a rally point and evacuate them when the operation is over.

i. **Rehearsals.** Every soldier must know the plan and his role in it. Units should rehearse their formations and movement techniques and their actions—

- On enemy contact.
- At rally points.
- At the linkup point.
- At the ORP.
- At danger areas.
- At the objective.

SECTION III. MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

Movement to contact is an offensive operation used to gain and maintain contact with the enemy. It is normally used when the enemy situation is vague and there is not time to reconnoiter extensively to locate the enemy. The fundamentals and techniques discussed here also apply to the approach phase of a hasty or deliberate attack; the main difference is the amount of enemy intelligence. Because the enemy situation is not clear, the company moves in a way that provides security and supports a rapid buildup of combat power against enemy units once they are identified. In the approach phase of an attack, the enemy situation is more clear. Therefore, the company moves toward the objective in a way that avoids enemy detection and supports its deployment in the assault. Two methods for conducting a movement to contact are the search-and-attack technique and the approach-march technique.

4-8. FUNDAMENTALS

The application of the following fundamentals is determined by the CO as he analyzes the situation and selects the proper tactics to conduct the mission. The CO retains freedom of maneuver by moving the company in a manner that—

- Makes enemy contact with the smallest element possible.(Ideally an R&S element.)
- Rapidly develops combat power upon enemy contact.
- Provides all-round security for the unit.
- Supports the battalion concept.

He reports all information rapidly and accurately, and strives to gain and maintain contact with the enemy.

4-9. CONSIDERATIONS

The battalion may direct the company's technique. If not, the CO considers his mission and the battalion concept as he conducts his estimate to select the best technique. Normally, when operating as part of a battalion movement to contact, the company will employ the same technique as the battalion. The following considerations may also assist the commander in developing his concept.

a. **Time Available.** The time available for planning, coordinating, and rehearsing may impact on the decision. The approach-march technique generally requires much less time for preparation. The company may require only a brief FRAGO assigning the movement formation/technique and some simple graphic control measures to begin movement. The search-and-attack technique may require more preparation time because the platoons and squads have more planning responsibilities, such as patrol base, linkups, and casualty evacuations.

b. **Speed of Movement.** The speed that the company is required to move is a major factor. With either technique, the faster the company moves, the less effective its R&S efforts will be. It becomes more likely that the enemy will initiate fires at the time and place he selects. The approach-march technique is normally more effective in quickly reacting to enemy contacts.

c. **Enemy.** The CO considers the clarity of the enemy situation. Although the enemy situation is vague in every movement to contact, the CO should have some information. The possible enemy locations and probable strength are key. The CO considers these locations to plan the company's movement and their probable strength to determine his security needs and to analyze the risks for each technique. The expected enemy action upon contact is also considered. If the CO expects him to fight, then the approach march may be the more effective technique. If the enemy is attempting to avoid detection or quickly disengage, the search-and-attack technique may be the better method.

d. **Security.** The amount of preparation time, the required movement speed, and the enemy situation all have a direct impact on the company's security requirements. The CO also considers the terrain, the adjacent units, the available combat support, and the present status of his unit to determine how to provide security for his company. Successful movements to contact depend on locating the enemy without being detected. This provides the CO the initiative to develop the situation by fully coordinating and supporting the attack with all available resources.

e. **Combined Technique.** An effective option may be to combine the techniques and have the lead platoon use the search-and-attack technique and the rest of the unit use the approach-march technique. The lead platoon is assigned reconnaissance missions to find the enemy (Figure 4-8). In this example, the CO assigned route reconnaissance tasks to 2d Platoon. Checkpoints and NAIs are assigned to focus the subordinate on specific locations. The phase lines can also be used to control the lead platoon by directing that they be crossed on order. The company main body follows the reconnaissance at a distance that allows it to rapidly maneuver based on the reports from the lead platoon. The formation and movement technique for the main body will vary but generally applies the fundamentals for the approach-march technique (paragraph 4-11).

4-10. THE SEARCH-AND-ATTACK TECHNIQUE

This decentralized technique uses multiple, coordinated, small-unit (team/squad/platoon) actions to find the enemy. If the company makes contact without being detected by the enemy, the CO then has the initiative. The CO now has the option to destroy the enemy with the immediately available combat potential, to maneuver the remainder of the company to destroy the enemy, or to follow the enemy force back to its base camp and destroy him there. During his planning, the CO decides how to find the enemy, how to fix or follow him, and then how to finish him.

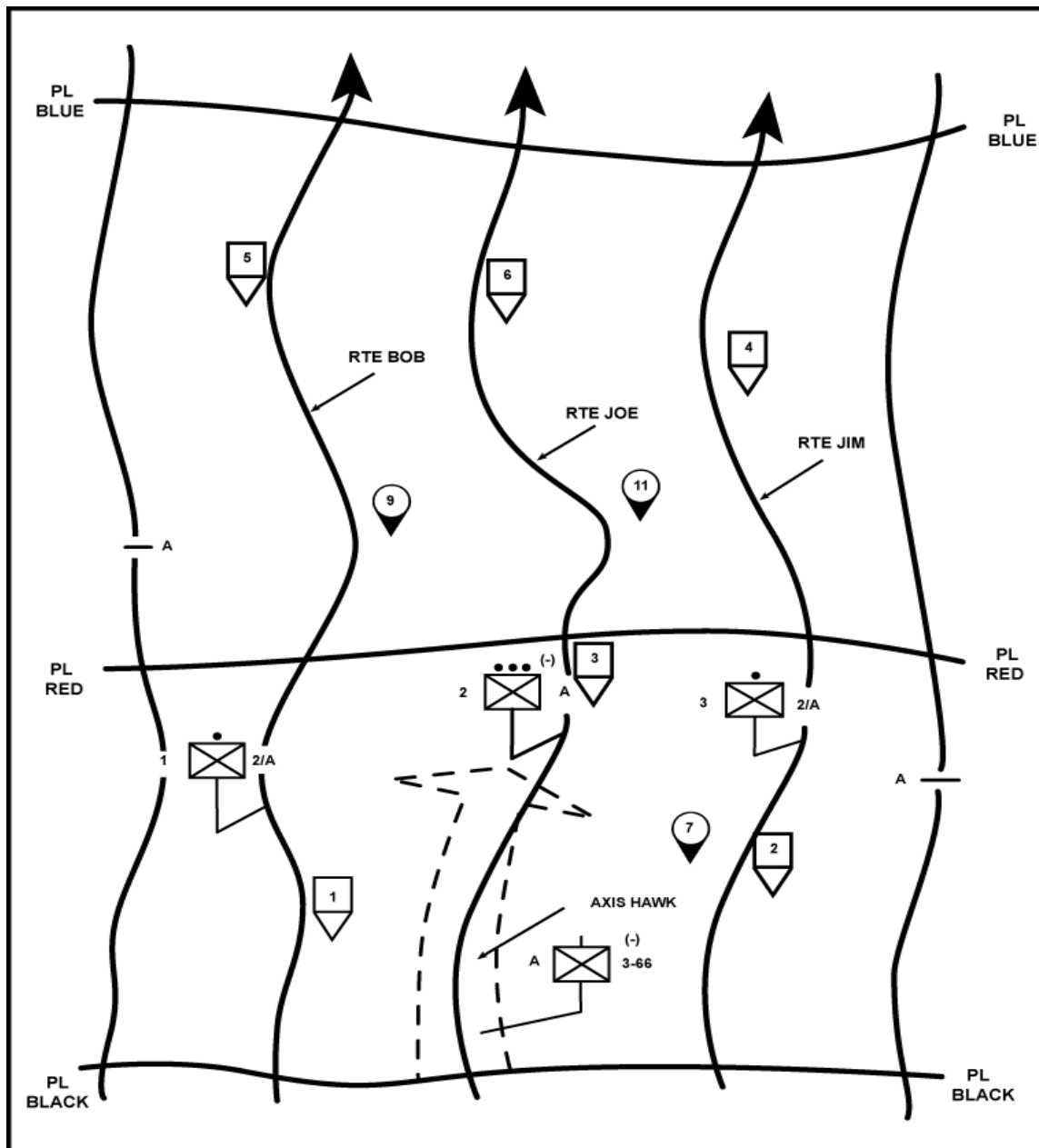


Figure 4-8. Combined techniques.

a. **Concept Development.** The concept development process in paragraph 4-13 also applies for a search and attack. Initially, the decisive points are identified as the most likely enemy locations. Once the enemy has been located, the specific decisive point must be determined as in any attack and a concept developed for generating overwhelming combat power there. The initial concept must include the actions to finish the enemy force once they are located. At times, this part of the plan may be very general or consist only of control measures and be-prepared missions to provide flexibility and support the rapid issuance of FRAGOs.

(1) The CO must understand the battalion commander's concept and what freedom of action the company has to engage the enemy. At times, the company must engage and destroy all enemy within their capabilities. In other cases, the company is expected to locate, follow, and report small, enemy units to allow the battalion to concentrate and destroy these forces.

(2) The CO must focus the platoons/squads on the likely enemy locations. He assigns missions IAW the battalion commander's concept. Possible tasks include a zone or area reconnaissance, an ambush, or a surveillance. The small-unit leaders must know what actions to take when they locate the enemy without being detected or if detected. The platoon that is most likely to make contact is normally designated the main effort.

b. **Considerations.** The CO determines the number and size of the units that will conduct reconnaissance and or combat actions against the enemy. The size of the area, the duration of the mission, the soldier's load, and the probable size of the enemy force are key to this decision.

(1) The size of the area of operations is considered in relation to how much time is available to search the area. When allocating terrain, the CO must consider how the platoons will conduct the reconnaissance, how to provide security, and how to provide control.

(a) One technique is to assign small AOs that keep the platoons more concentrated and help maintain control. The platoons are directed to move into the next AO on order.

(b) Another technique is to divide the company area into zones. The CO concentrates most of the company in one zone and uses small team/squad patrols to reconnoiter the next zone or the rest of the area. Once the company(-) has completed the reconnaissance in the initial zone, it moves into the area that has been reconnoitered by the small units. This technique is effective when a detailed reconnaissance is required but also supports the seizure of the initiative through speed, stealth, and surprise. The small, dispersed units have a better chance of locating the enemy undetected. They also provide initial reconnaissance information for the CO to focus the remainder of the company's reconnaissance efforts on.

(2) The CO must consider how the duration of the mission effects the company's ability to conduct CONOPS. If the mission will continue for days or longer, the CO must develop a concept that allows his subordinates to maintain combat effectiveness. The concept must address the use of patrol bases and limited visibility operations. The CO must ensure that the concept provides sufficient rest to maintain his soldiers' stealth, alertness, and security. The duration of the mission will also effect the soldier's load. The longer the mission is expected to last, the heavier the soldiers' loads may get to reduce the need for resupply.

(3) The soldier's load has a tremendous impact on a search-and-attack mission. The ability to move with stealth and security while close to the enemy is hindered by heavy loads. But, resupply operations may also hinder the company's operation and allow the enemy to locate the unit by following or observing the resupply vehicles.

(a) The CO must determine what the essential requirements are for the soldiers' loads. If this results in excessive loads, he plans for resupply operations that avoid enemy detection and maintain the security of the company.

(b) The CO may combine techniques to reduce the risk of moving with these heavy loads. He identifies ORPs or company patrol bases throughout the AO, and the company moves between these ORPs using the approach–march technique to provide greater control and security. After securing and occupying the ORP, the platoons leave their rucksacks and move out to conduct decentralized search-and-attack operations. A security force secures the ORP until the unit's return to get their rucksacks and move to the next ORP. Platoons can use this same technique when the risk is acceptable.

(4) The size of the enemy units that the company is likely to make contact with will assist the CO in determining the risk to the company. The CO must also consider the enemy's capabilities and likely COA. The specific enemy weapons capabilities are key to understanding the threat. The CO must consider these as he develops his concept to ensure the security of his company even when conducting decentralized operations. The CO may direct specific force protection restraints such as no patrols smaller than a squad, or platoons must be able to consolidate within 20 minutes, or platoons will depart their patrol bases NLT 60 minutes prior to BMNT.

c. **Find the Enemy.** During this phase of the operation, the focus is on reconnaissance to locate the enemy. Generally, small units able to move quickly and with stealth are more likely to locate the enemy without detection. The CO's concept may restrict the platoon's authority to destroy the enemy once located. It may be more important to locate and follow enemy units to identify their base camps. When not restricted, the unit making contact takes immediate action to destroy the enemy. If it is not within this unit's capabilities, the platoon conducts linkups to mass sufficient combat potential and to coordinate the attack.

(1) Normally, platoons will not receive a mission with the vague requirement to search and attack. The CO must be more specific in stating his concept. His concept must also address the likely actions to destroy the enemy once they are located. Specific taskings may include route, area, and zone reconnaissance or surveillance tasks. Platoons may also be tasked to conduct ambushes or to be prepared to conduct an attack to destroy enemy forces; to provide security for another force, such as the CP or the mortar section; or to act as the company reserve.

(2) During limited visibility, reconnaissance is more difficult and potentially more dangerous. If a unit makes contact with the enemy in the dark, a hasty attack is very risky. Reconnaissance is also less effective in the dark because the unit covers less area and is unable to detect many signs of enemy activity. Although observation is reduced during limited visibility, the unit may be more likely to detect the enemy by sight or smell. Route and small-area reconnaissance tasks are more effective for limited visibility.

(3) Ambushes are also very effective tasks during limited visibility. The enemy may avoid daylight movements if aware of the company's presence in the AO. Ambushes should be set up on the enemy's likely routes or near their water and or food sources.

Patrol bases should integrate ambushes and OPs (with thermal sights, NVDs, and PEWS) into their security plans. These tasks support the seizure and maintenance of the initiative.

d. **Fix and Finish the Enemy.** These phases of a search and attack are closely related. An initial attempt to finish the enemy by the platoon in contact may quickly become the fixing effort for the company's attack if the enemy was too strong for the platoon or the platoon was unable to achieve surprise. When the authority to conduct offensive actions to destroy the enemy has been decentralized to the lowest level, the fundamentals of an attack apply at every echelon.

(1) *Achieve surprise.* Locate the enemy without being detected. This allows more time to plan and coordinate the attack. Once detected, speed and violence in the assault may also achieve surprise, but this will rarely be true against a prepared enemy defense.

(2) *Limit the enemy's freedom of action.* Fix the enemy in position. Block his routes of escape with indirect fires and or maneuver forces. Suppress his weapons systems, obscure his vision, and disrupt his command and control. Reconnaissance is continuous; leaders at every echelon are seeking out the enemy's dispositions, strengths, and weaknesses. Initially, these actions are directed toward supporting an attack by the lowest echelon. At some point, the leader of this unit must determine if he is able to achieve fire superiority and also conduct the assault. If it is determined that the unit in contact has insufficient combat power to complete the destruction of the enemy, the leader focuses on fixing the enemy and reconnoitering to support the attack by the next higher echelon.

(3) *Maintain security.* While attempting to take these actions against the enemy—the enemy is attempting to do the same. Do not assume the enemy that has been identified is alone; there may be mutually supporting positions or units. The planned envelopment or flank attack of one enemy position may be moving through the kill zone of another unit. Or this maneuver may expose the flank of the assault force to fires from undetected positions.

(4) *Concentrate combat power.* Once contact is made, the plan must support the rapid concentration of combat power to fix and or destroy the enemy. Leaders at each echelon plan to destroy the enemy within their capabilities. The combat potential of small units may be increased by ensuring each has the ability to request fire support.

(a) The CO may retain a portion of the company in reserve to react quickly to enemy contact by one of the small units. However, when the company is operating in a more dispersed manner, this company reserve may not be responsive enough. It may be more effective for each platoon to retain its own reserve.

(b) If the unit or platoon cannot finish the enemy, the CO determines how to fix or contain the enemy while concentrating his dispersed combat potential. He then develops an attack plan to destroy the enemy force. He may use the fixing force to support by fire, and assault with another platoon(s); or he may use artillery and CAS to destroy him in position.

(c) Each leader must report the results of their reconnaissance to support the CO's planning. They should recommend effective support positions, good assault positions or directions of attack, and likely enemy weak points. The leader of the unit in contact should also identify good hookup points if the preplanned points are not effective. In most cases, this leader should coordinate face to face with the CO or the leader of the assault element before initiating the assault.

e. **Follow the Enemy.** When the purpose of the operation is to locate the enemy's base camps or other fixed sites, the company concept must avoid the non-decisive fights between small units. When small enemy units are located, the units report and attempt to follow or track these units back to their base camps. Well-trained trackers familiar with the area may be able to identify and follow enemy tracks that are hours or even days old (FM 7-8). The CO must ensure that his concept does not risk the security of his force in the attempt to make undetected contact and track enemy units. Units tracking the enemy must be ready to react to enemy contact and avoid likely ambush situations. It may also be possible to track the enemy's movement through the AO by using stationary OPs as trail watchers to report enemy activity.

f. **Enter the Area of Operations.** The CO also decides how the company will enter its zone or area of operations, how to move once in the area, where to locate certain units or facilities, and what the requirements for contingency plans are. This includes establishing the proper graphic control measures to control the movement of the units, to provide for linkups between units, and to support the rapid concentration of the company's combat power. It also includes synchronizing the actions of the company and providing specific tasks or restraints to ensure subordinates understand what actions should be taken once contact with the enemy is made.

(1) The company may enter the area or zone by moving as a company (Figure 4-9) and then splitting up, by air assault, or by infiltrating squads and platoons (Figure 4-10).

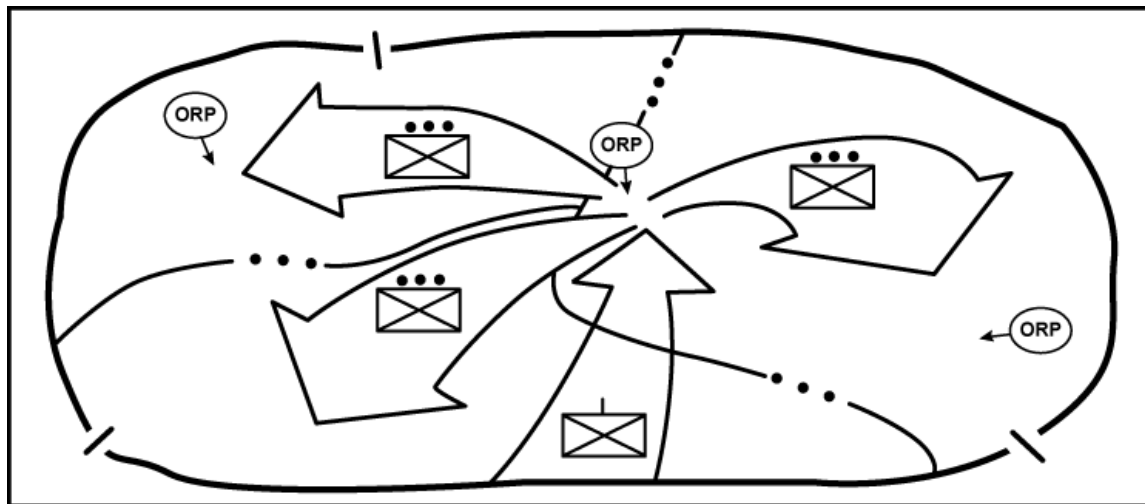


Figure 4-9. Entry by company.

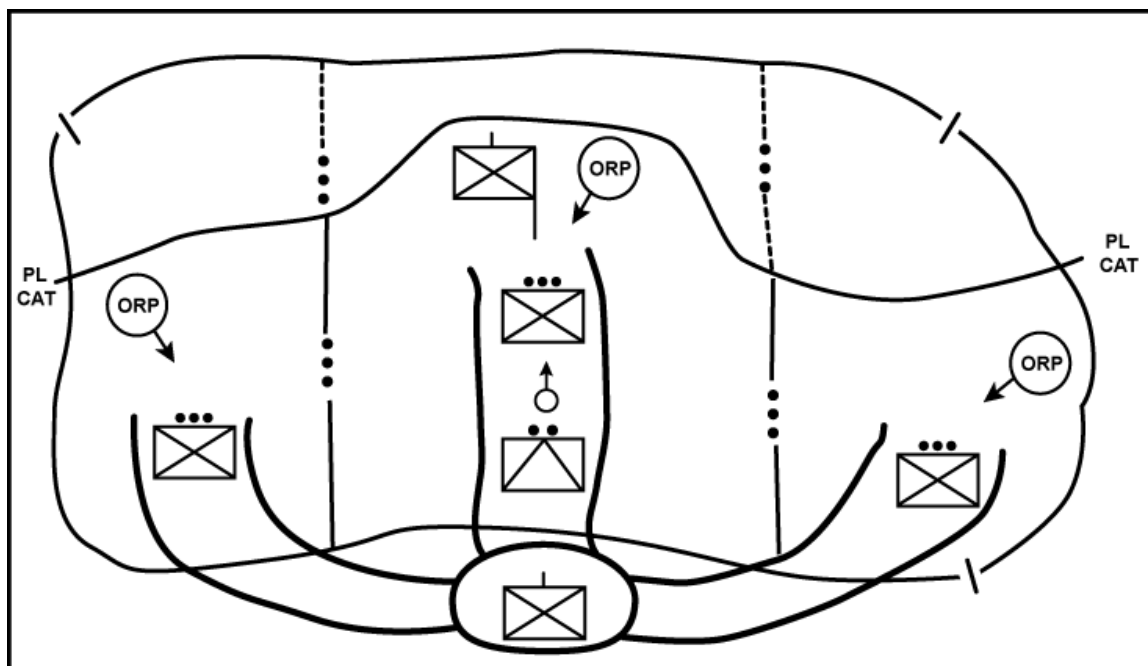


Figure 4-10. Infiltration by squad/platoon.

(2) Movement within the area or through the zone of attack may be conducted by the entire company or by individual platoons. Figure 4-11 shows a concept sketch for a search and attack conducted without a company linkup.

(3) The CO must decide where the company CP will be. It may collocate with the main effort platoon, or it may position itself in a central location where it can communicate with and move quickly to each platoon's location. A technique to support CONOPS is to rotate a reserve platoon each day to provide security for the CP and the company mortars. Each platoon spends only 48 hours actively searching for the enemy and then rotates into the reserve role. This should prevent a serious degradation in effectiveness due to sleep loss.

(4) Company mortars must be located where they have security and can support the platoons. The CO may collocate them with the company CP. The movement of their ammunition is the most difficult challenge. The CO may direct the reserve platoon to carry the ammunition to the next firing position. Another option is to establish company ORPs or patrol bases and place the mortars at these locations. The mortar ammunition can then be carried by the entire company; the soldiers drop off the rounds before moving out to the platoon areas. However, the entire company must return to this location before continuing the operation through the zone.

(5) The threat of enemy armor and the soldier's load are two primary considerations for employing the antiarmor assets. If there is an armored threat, then the CO must decide where to position the Dragons. If the platoons are likely to encounter enemy armor, they need to have the Dragon and or 90-mm recoilless rifles with them. In very close terrain, the AT4/LAW may be more effective than the Dragon. The company antiarmor assets normally will be attached to the platoons. If the threat does not require antiarmor weapons, the CO may still use some thermal sights for observation, and the personnel can

augment the company mortar section/platoon. The resupply of batteries and cooling bottles must be considered.

(6) Contingency plans may include actions in case one platoon becomes decisively engaged or in case the company receives a new mission. All units should routinely report possible LZ/PZ locations, mortar firing positions, any sign of recent enemy activity, and any sightings of civilians in the area.

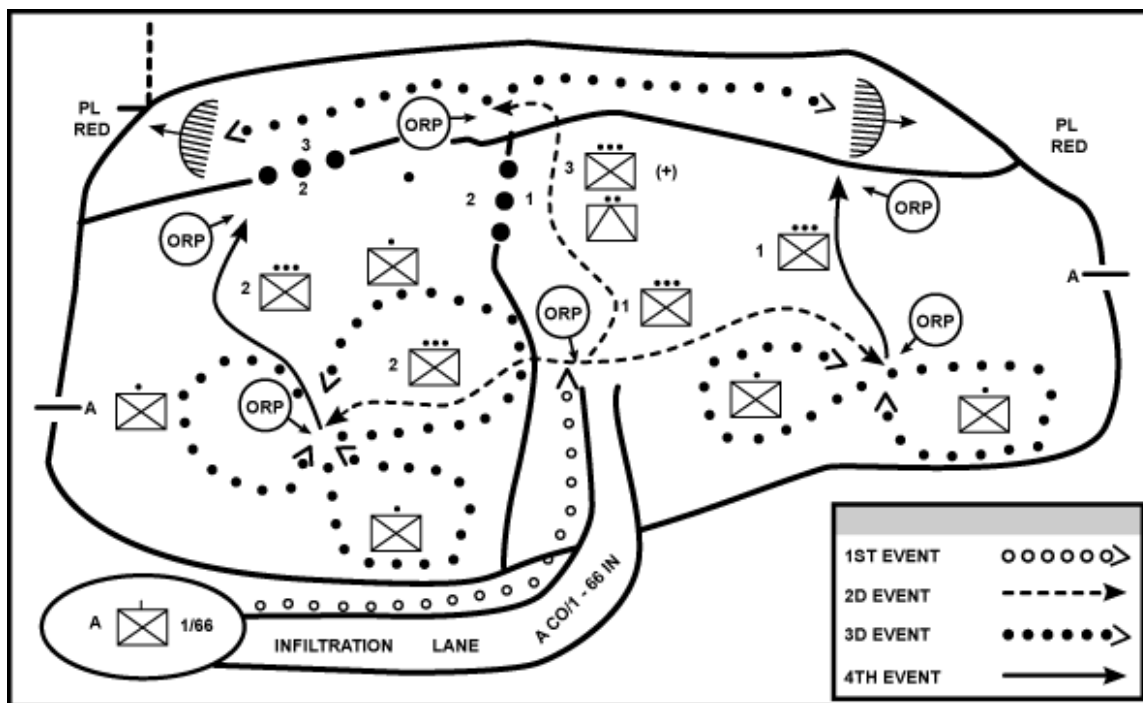


Figure 4-11. Company search-and-attack concept sketch.

4-11. THE APPROACH-MARCH TECHNIQUE

The company normally uses this technique when it is conducting a movement to contact as part of the battalion. The rifle company can be tasked to act as the advanced guard, to move as part of the battalion main body, or to provide flank or rear guards for the battalion, depending on its location in the formation and its assigned mission.

a. When planning for an approach-march movement to contact, the CO needs certain information from the battalion commander. As a minimum, he needs to know—

- The company's mission.
- The friendly and enemy situations.
- The route (axis of advance) and the desired rate of movement.
- The control measures to be used.
- The attachments (TOWs, engineers, and air defense weapons).
- The company's actions on contact.
- The fire support plan.
- The company's actions upon reaching the march objective, if one is used.

With this information, the CO develops his scheme of maneuver and fire support plan. He provides this same information to the platoon leaders.

b. The battalion may conduct a movement to contact on a single axis or on multiple axes. The lead company (advance guard) on an axis is responsible—

(1) To protect the battalion from a surprise attack by providing early warning of enemy positions and obstacles.

(2) To assist the forward movement of the battalion by removing obstacles or finding routes around them.

(3) To destroy enemy forces (within its capability).

(4) To rapidly develop the situation once contact is made.

c. The lead company or advanced guard on an axis moves using traveling overwatch or bounding overwatch, depending on the situation. It is normally assigned an axis of advance or a zone of action and a march objective on which to orient its movement. Phase lines and checkpoints may also be used to help control movement.

(1) The CO selects the movement technique and formation based on the likelihood of enemy contact and the speed of movement desired by the battalion commander. Bounding overwatch provides the best security; but, traveling overwatch is faster. If traveling overwatch is used by the company, the lead platoon may use bounding overwatch for added security.

(2) The CO must retain the freedom to maneuver his platoons and weapons. He analyzes the terrain, anticipates where he might make contact, and plans fires on those locations. He should avoid terrain, such as draws, ravines, narrow trails, and steep slopes, that will restrict maneuver.

d. When not the lead company, the company uses traveling or traveling overwatch. It must be ready to fire or maneuver in support of the lead company, or to assume the lead company's mission.

e. Once contact is made with the enemy, the CO maintains that contact until ordered to do otherwise by the battalion commander. The following actions must take place at once:

(1) Return fire, deploy, and report. When contact is made, the platoon in contact returns fire at once and takes cover. If the enemy is unaware, the platoon making contact reports and deploys to prevent detection. The maneuver to a position of advantage by this platoon (or other units) should maintain the element of surprise until preparation for the hasty attack is completed. If detected, or once the decision is made to initiate the hasty attack, the platoon leader attempts to fight through, destroying the enemy with the resources that are immediately available. His FO should begin calling for fire. He then reports to the CO and develops the situation. The overwatch element immediately fires at the enemy position. Trail platoons that are not able to fire take cover and wait for orders.

(2) The squad/platoon that initially received direct fire immediately executes the attack drill (FM 7-8). The intent is to rapidly seize the initiative at the lowest echelon possible with aggressive small-unit actions. This unit attempts to achieve fire superiority to fix or suppress the enemy with the resources that are immediately available. This unit then executes a flank attack directed against an identified enemy weakness. If this is not possible, the unit in contact develops the situation to identify the enemy's flanks, any covered and concealed routes around the enemy position, possible supporting positions (both friendly and enemy), and any protective obstacles that the enemy has constructed. This information is quickly reported to the CO.

(3) Upon receipt of this information, the CO determines the proper action to be taken. He (or the XO) also reports the situation to battalion. The CO may conduct or direct his units to conduct additional reconnaissance. The company FSO should be requesting/coordinating indirect fires to support the company's maneuver.

(a) Conduct a hasty attack. If the CO feels he can defeat the enemy force and an attack supports the battalion commander's concept, he quickly conducts a hasty attack before the enemy can react. (See Section IV.)

(b) Bypass the enemy. The CO, with battalion permission, may bypass an enemy force. He may bypass the enemy with one platoon at a time or with the entire company at once (Figure 4-12). Or, he may be directed to fix/suppress the enemy while the battalion bypasses. Indirect fires are also used to suppress the enemy. When the company has suppressed the enemy, the battalion commander may order the company to disengage and rejoin the battalion, or hand off the enemy to a following unit.

(c) Fix and suppress the enemy. When the enemy cannot be bypassed and a hasty attack by the company would be too costly, battalion will normally have the company fix and suppress the enemy (Figure 4-13). This ensures that he does not have the freedom to fire or maneuver against the main body of the battalion while it moves to attack the enemy. The CO supports the battalion commander's planning by reconnoitering to identify the enemy's disposition, strengths, and weaknesses. Covered and concealed routes, good support positions, and enemy obstacles are also identified and reported to battalion.

(d) Establish a hasty defense. Although this action tends to give the initiative to the enemy force, it might provide a needed advantage. This might be required in a meeting engagement with a superior force. The company may establish a hasty defense to protect itself while the remainder of the battalion is maneuvering against the enemy.

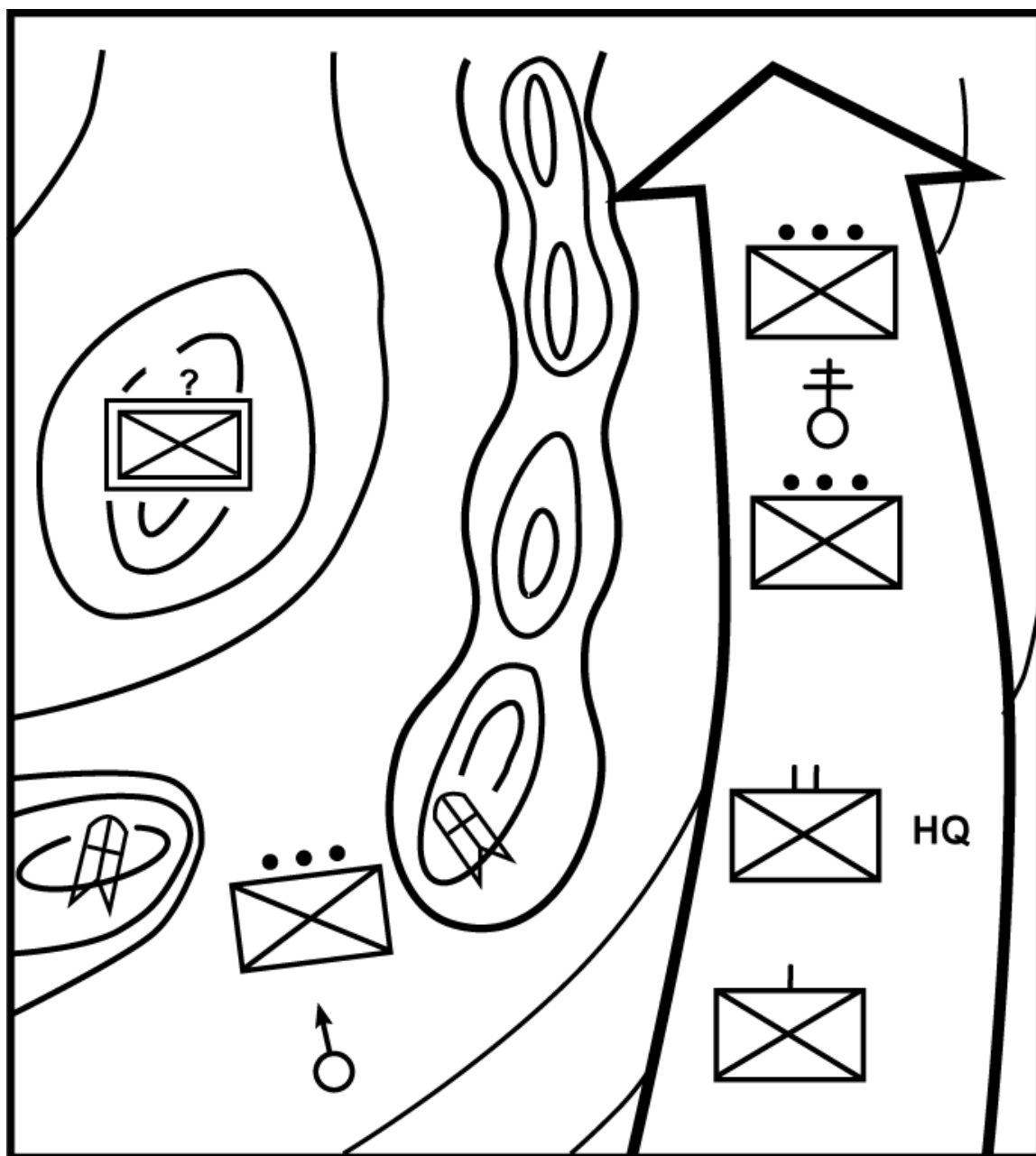


Figure 4-12. Bypass.

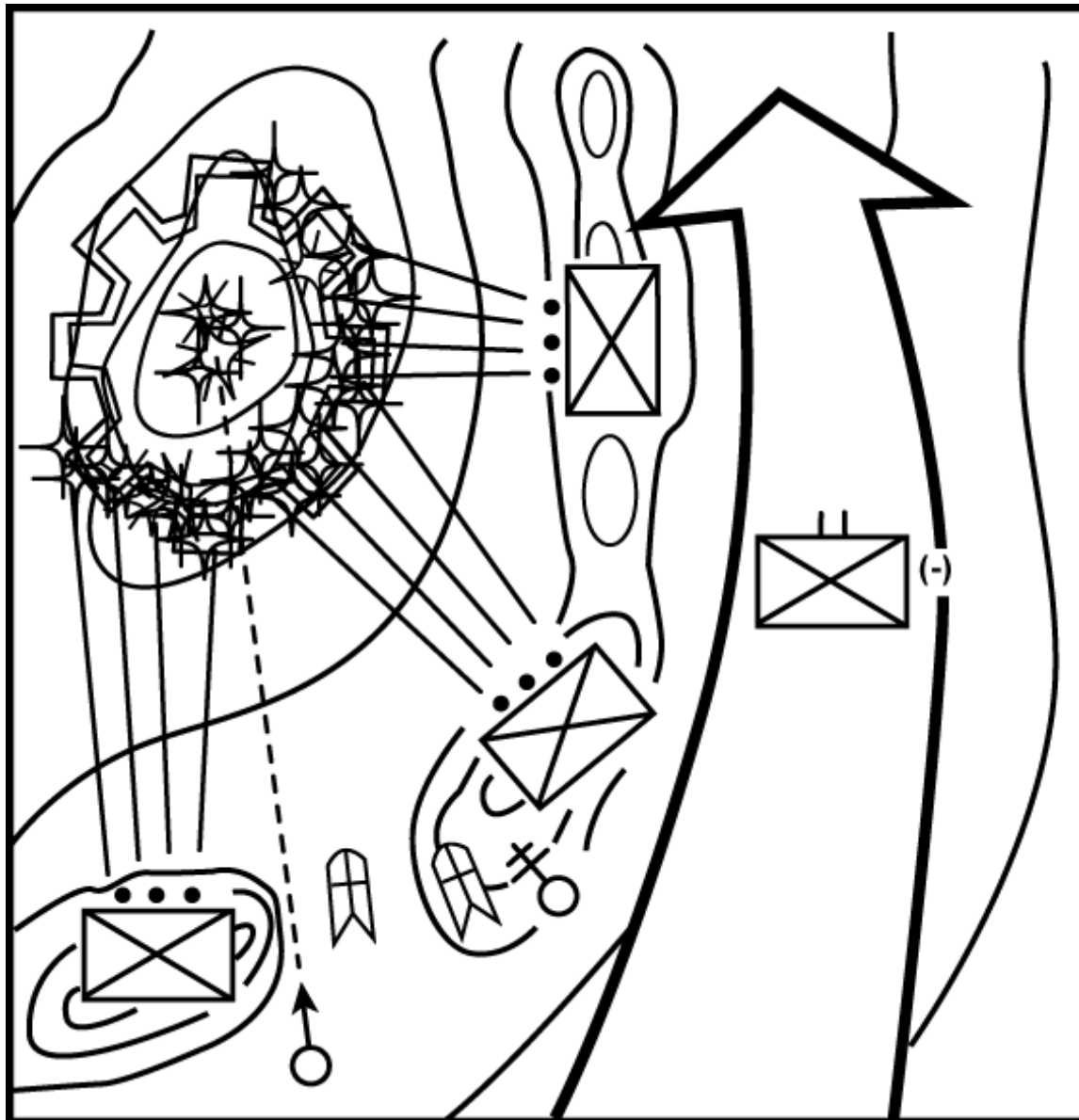


Figure 4-13. Fix and suppress.

(e) Disengage. This action is not a preferred option unless disengaging is the only way to ensure preservation of the force. Use of indirect fires and bounding/overwatch elements are essential in disengaging from a superior force. The company may disengage while another unit maintains contact. Or the company may disengage by moving back through the battalion to draw the enemy into an ambush.

Section IV. ATTACKS

The company may conduct attacks independently or as part of the battalion. An attack may be either hasty or deliberate. Because of the difficulties with fire control, navigation, and identification of friendly and enemy soldiers, limited visibility attacks are normally deliberate attacks requiring detailed reconnaissance and planning. On receipt of the battalion warning order, the CO starts his troop-leading procedure and begins his planning.

4-12. TYPES

The infantry rifle company attacks as part of any operation. Counterattacks and spoiling attacks are discussed in Chapter 5. Raids and ambushes are discussed in Chapter 6. This section discusses the hasty attack and the deliberate attack.

a. **Hasty Attack.** When the company makes contact with an enemy force, the CO may conduct a hasty attack. On contact, the unit must react immediately: deploy; suppress the enemy; attack through a gap, flank, or weak point; and report to the commander. The preparation for a hasty attack is similar to that of a deliberate attack, but time and resources are limited to what is readily available. Squad and platoon attack drills and company SOPs support rapid preparation and execution of hasty attacks. The company may conduct hasty attacks as a result of a movement to contact, a meeting engagement, or a chance contact during movement; after a successful defense or as part of a defensive operation; and in any other situation when the company has the opportunity to seize the initiative and take offensive action against vulnerable enemy forces.

b. **Deliberate Attack.** A company deliberate attack is normally coordinated as part of a battalion attack. The same principles apply to hasty and deliberate attacks. The effect sought is the same; the difference lies in the amount of planning, reconnoitering, coordinating, and preparing prior to execution. Deliberate attacks are characterized by precise planning based on detailed information, thorough reconnaissance, preparation, and rehearsals. They are conducted when the enemy is in well-prepared defensive positions or when a hasty attack is not possible. The leader has more time to coordinate fire support, analyze the situation, and synchronize activities.

c. **Raids.** A raid is a surprise attack that includes a planned withdrawal from the objective.

d. **Ambushes.** These are surprise attacks against moving or temporarily halted enemy units. Infantry companies may conduct ambushes as part of offensive and defensive operations.

e. **Spoiling Attack.** This is a limited-objective attack made to delay, disrupt, or destroy the enemy's capability to attack.

f. **Counterattack.** This is an attack by defensive forces to regain the initiative or to deny the enemy success with his attack.

4-13. OFFENSIVE CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in Chapter 2, the restated mission statement and the other critical facts and deductions provide the focus for developing the offensive concept.

a. Begin developing the concept at the decisive point on the objective and work backward to the LD. First consider the decisive action on the objective. Then consider (as

required) the conduct of the breach; the positioning of the support, assault, and security elements; the leader's reconnaissance; the occupation of the ORP; and the maneuver from the company's current location to the assault position. Once the CO has identified his potentially decisive point(s), he develops his concept.

b. Determine decisive points and times to focus combat power.

(1) The battalion commander's concept and taskings for the company may focus the company on a very specific decisive point and time. This is most likely when the company is the battalion main effort.

(2) For example, the company may be tasked to conduct the main attack for the battalion's attack. In this case, the company decisive point will be somewhere in the vicinity of the objective (key terrain, a critical enemy position, or the enemy CP), and the CO's concept will seek to generate maximum combat power here to accomplish his mission.

(3) Often, particularly in the offense, there are a series of critical actions that must be accomplished for the company to complete its mission. For instance, the reconnaissance must locate the enemy's position and identify his defensive scheme to identify possible weak points at which to conduct the breach. Then the breach element must successfully breach the enemy's obstacles to allow the assault element to maneuver onto the objective. And finally, the assault element must achieve success at the decisive point.

(4) In developing the concept, the CO identifies these critical actions and the potentially decisive locations and times when they must be accomplished. The subordinate unit tasked to accomplish these actions is designated the main effort and supported by the remainder of the company. The subordinate unit that is assigned the final critical action, the decisive action that accomplishes the company's mission, is designated the main attack.

(5) The CO must identify these critical actions and decide when to shift the main effort. His concept must support the quick success of each. Proper planning and execution results in a synchronized operation that rapidly concentrates combat power at a series of potentially decisive points. The cumulative effect on the enemy is a rapid loss of combat potential and the inability to react to the main attack at the decisive point.

c. Determine the results that must be achieved at these decisive point(s) to accomplish the mission. Normally, the purpose from the company mission statement clearly states the desired results for the main attack. At times, particularly during decentralized operations, the CO must analyze the situation more closely to determine the desired results.

d. Determine the purposes to be achieved by the main and supporting efforts throughout the operation. (The supporting purposes must be clearly linked to the main effort's assigned purpose). The CO must avoid employing his main attack in support of an earlier main effort because of the risk of not having sufficient combat potential available in the main attack at the decisive time and point.

(1) The main attack's purpose is often the purpose from the company's mission statement. At times, the company's purpose must be modified slightly to be appropriate for the main attack platoon. When modified, it must be clear that success by the main attack results in success for the company.

(2) The supporting effort's purposes are selected by determining what must be achieved to support the success of the main effort. Examples of supporting effort

purposes include; to allow the main effort to maneuver on the objective, to allow the breach element to breach obstacles, to prevent surprise on the main body, or to prevent the enemy from reacting to the assault.

(3) The CO uses the offensive framework to assist him in developing his concept. Although the focus is on the decisive action by the main attack in the objective area; supporting attacks, reconnaissance and security requirements, and the need for a reserve must also be addressed.

e. Determine the essential tasks for each subordinate unit (main and supporting efforts) that achieves the selected purposes (paragraph d).

(1) When linked with the purpose, a clearly defined, attainable, and decisive mission statement is assigned. The mission should clearly focus the subordinate unit on the terrain, the enemy, or a friendly unit.

(2) Position the main and supporting attacks to concentrate combat power at the decisive point. Identify reconnaissance and security requirements. Consider the need for a reserve or other means to provide flexibility.

f. Task-organize units (platoons and sections) to accomplish the identified missions.

(1) The CO allocates resources to the main effort first and then to the supporting efforts. Normally, the CO will not task-organize below squad level or specific weapons or equipment. At times, particularly when understrength, the CO may have to task-organize below squad level.

(2) The size of these organizations may range from a squad to a reinforced platoon. If there are insufficient resources to ensure each of the supporting effort missions is attainable, the task may be modified. For example, the original mission may have been to guard the flank of the main effort to prevent his envelopment; it may now be changed to a screen task. If required the purpose may also be changed. In this case, it might be changed to provide early warning and prevent surprise of the main effort. Or if the original task was to block, a delay task may be attainable and still achieve the desired results.

g. Assign command and control headquarters for each of the task organized units.

(1) All platoon/section leaders should be used fully. If additional leaders are required, the XO, 1SG, company FSO, and other company leaders are used.

(2) When no senior leader is available, the senior squad leader may be the unit leader. Or if the company has a one squad reserve, it may be led by its assigned squad leader.

h. Complete a task organization by assigning all organic or attached units. Of particular concern may be the FOs, medics, and other attachments. They should be attached to the unit where their unique capabilities are most effectively employed or possibly where they provide the most flexibility.

i. Establish control measures that clarify and support the accomplishment of the assigned mission.

(1) Time events and use control measures (axis, boundaries, DOA, assault positions, support positions, objectives . . .) to synchronize subordinate actions without stifling initiative.

(2) Certain control measures may be required to provide additional safety for the unit. These may include fire control measures, procedures, or special signals or markings to ensure understanding.

j. The essential part of the concept, dealing with the actions at the decisive point, has been completed. The focus of this next phase in the concept development is to ensure the main effort is weighted. The CO can weight the main effort in many different ways. Some examples include:

- Attaching additional squads/weapons.
- Assigning priority of fires or allocating a priority target.
- Assigning priority of any support (CS/CSS), such as—1st in priority for engineer support.
- Limiting the main effort's area of responsibility to allow this unit to focus on the critical action. For example, tasking supporting efforts to provide security for the main effort.
- Locating other resources in the vicinity of the main effort that support the main effort's focus on the decisive action.
- Providing additional time to prepare, rehearse, or conduct reconnaissance.

k. The following actions complete the offensive concept development.

(1) *Completing the movement plan.* This should address the movement of the entire unit from its present location(s) through its eventual consolidation. Likely COAs for exploitation should also be considered. Routes, order of movement, timings, and the requirements for security and control must also be considered and addressed as appropriate.

(2) *Completing the reconnaissance and security plan.* The R&S requirements at the objective may be complete, but the CO must consider these requirements throughout the mission. What are the security requirements during movement, in the ORP, during consolidation? The company's reconnaissance effort must be focused on the decisive action, but it may also include reconnaissance of all routes, danger areas, key terrain, or other locations that may be critical to the mission. The CO then prioritizes these requirements and tasks units to accomplish them.

(3) *Completing the fire plan.* The CO plans both direct and indirect fires in the detail required by the situation. The fire planning must address all phases of the attack to include the approach into the objective area, the actions on the objective, any contingency missions, and the consolidation plan. At times, the situation may require less planning at company level and more at the platoon level. Platoon leaders routinely coordinate their fire plans.

(4) *Developing the CSS plan.* The CO must plan for casualty evacuation, resupply, and movement of rucksacks/other equipment. The CO also plans for the supplies and equipment needed to support the attack and subsequent operations. He always considers the impact of soldier's load on the mission and normally provides additional instructions to ensure the soldiers carry only what is required. He may also plan for transportation of the items normally maintained in the battalion trains so he can maintain the momentum of the attack or prepare a defense against an enemy counterattack.

(5) *Planning likely contingencies.* The CO must plan ahead for any possibilities, such as his actions in the event of detection during an infiltration or in the event of an increased threat of chemical attack by the enemy.

4-14. ACTIONS ON THE OBJECTIVE

The objective for the company may vary from the kill zone of a company ambush to a complex enemy strongpoint in an urban environment. In every case, the company's actions on the objective are critical and thus the focus of the commander's concept. The concept was developed starting with the decisive point on the objective. The missions for all the subordinate units are focused on the main attack's action at the decisive point. The commander's estimate will determine what other considerations must be included for the actions on the objective.

a. The actions of the company on the objective are conducted by teams, squads, and platoons. These actions may include breaching enemy obstacles, destroying bunkers, clearing trenchlines, searching EPWs, treating/evacuating casualties, providing supporting fires, and many other tasks. These tasks are discussed in detail in FM 7-8.

b. To complete his concept, the commander must ensure that he understands what must occur on the objective for the company to accomplish its mission. He then assigns tasks and allocates resources to complete these. He must determine how much detail is required to control and synchronize the actions of his subordinates; these measures should be kept as simple as possible.

(1) The amount of control required will vary based on the situation. As in any operation, the minimum essential control measures should be used. Control is provided by the units' relationship to the main attack. This method of control has the best chance of being effective once the fight begins.

(a) Effective reconnaissance also provides control by ensuring leaders understand the situation and the terrain's effect on their unit during execution.

(b) Rehearsals are an excellent means of ensuring control during execution. Full-scale rehearsals are essential to successful, deliberate attacks. They also support synchronization.

(2) Synchronization is also provided through the relationships to the main attack. If the support element clearly understands the commander's intent for their fires, they are more likely to provide effective support than if the CO attempts to establish a detailed time schedule. They can move, initiate fire, or lift or shift fires based on the actions of the main effort. In a similar manner, the reserve can move and or reposition based upon the actions of the main effort.

c. Paragraph 4-18 discusses the company's actions on the objective for an assault against an enemy strongpoint. The fundamentals and considerations for this complex objective also apply for most other company objectives.

4-15. REORGANIZATION.

This is the reorganizing of platoons, sections, and squads in order to continue operations. It is a continuous process and should be part of the company SOP. During reorganization, each platoon leader reports his platoon's situation, location, casualties, and ammunition status to the CO. The CO reports the same to the battalion. Ammunition is redistributed and units are resupplied. Casualties are treated and evacuated. Key positions are filled (weapons/leaders). Prisoners are processed and sent to collecting points, and enemy information and material are collected and reported. The company will always reorganize after an attack, but it may not always consolidate.

4-16. CONSOLIDATION

This is the organizing and positioning of platoons and weapons on a newly seized objective to defend against a counterattack. The CO should always plan to consolidate after an attack. The company may not consolidate if it has not achieved the assigned purpose or if the company has the opportunity and the combat potential to exploit the successful attack, within the framework of the battalion concept.

a. The CO also decides if the mission or situation requires the company to consolidate on the objective. If not, the CO may direct the company to consolidate on adjacent terrain or to withdraw to the ORP. Disadvantages to consolidating on the objective include the enemy's knowledge of this terrain and that counterattack or indirect fires may already have been planned on it.

b. The planning considerations for consolidation are similar to a perimeter defense (see Chapter 5). The CO assigns a sector of the company objective to each platoon to consolidate. He assigns missions and locations to each subordinate. He identifies a main effort and a reserve. He ensures that all units know their responsibilities and their locations. He integrates supporting assets into the defense. When time is limited, the CO can use either the clock method or the terrain feature method for consolidation.

(1) In the clock method, the CO divides the objective into hour segments like a clock (Figure 4-14). Twelve o'clock is either a compass heading or the direction of the enemy. He then assigns each platoon a sector by hour segments.

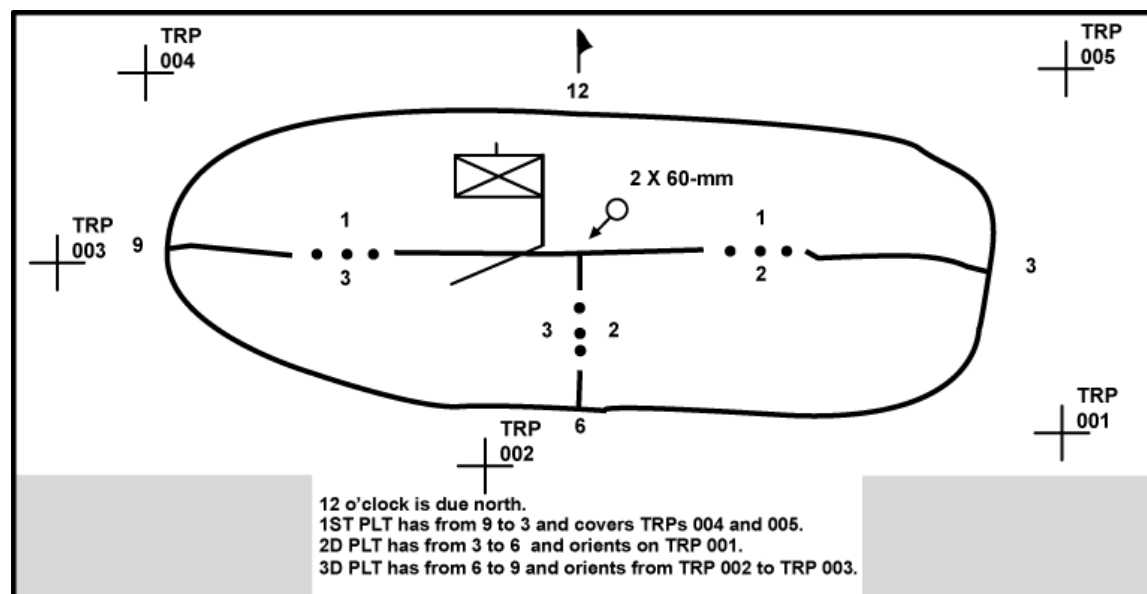


Figure 4-14. Clock method.

(2) In the terrain feature method, the CO gives each platoon two easily identifiable terrain features as the right and left limits of its sector/BP (Figure 4-15).

c. During consolidation, security is established (OPs and security patrols). Platoons and weapons crews are positioned to cover the most likely avenues of approach. Fields of fire are cleared, and fighting positions are prepared. Combat service support elements are moved forward, and casualties and EPWs are evacuated (see Chapter 8). Other reorganization actions also occur. Indirect fires are coordinated and FPFs are adjusted.

4-17. FIRE SUPPORT

This plan is developed at the same time as the scheme of maneuver. The FSO integrates the indirect fires, based on the CO's guidance, to support the company's maneuver throughout the operation. The desired outcome is to ensure that all available indirect fires are synchronized to have the greatest effect on the enemy. This requires that the preplanned targets are correctly positioned, that the best weapon engages each target using the proper shell/fuse combination, and that the responsibility for firing the target is assigned to the observer who is in the right location and understands how this target is synchronized to support the maneuver.

a. The fire planning normally begins at levels above the company. When the company FSO begins his planning, he normally has the battalion's target list, the battalion's priority of fires and allocation of priority targets, and the commanders' guidance for employing the indirect fire assets.

b. The company fire planning is a continuation of the process begun at battalion. The company FSO/CO designates additional targets, establishes a company priority of fires, and either directs priority targets or allocates this resource to the platoons.

c. Fires are planned to support all phases of the attack. The approach; the deployment into the assault, support, and security positions; the isolation of the entire objective and the breach site; the assault; and the consolidation/exploitation. These targets are planned on all known or suspected enemy locations. They may also be planned on likely avenues of approach or on prominent terrain features to provide flexibility.

d. Indirect fire is planned to suppress, obscure, neutralize, destroy, deceive, or disrupt enemy forces. Smoke or WP is used to screen the company when moving across danger areas or when breaching obstacles. And it can be used to isolate the objective by disrupting reinforcing or counterattacking forces.

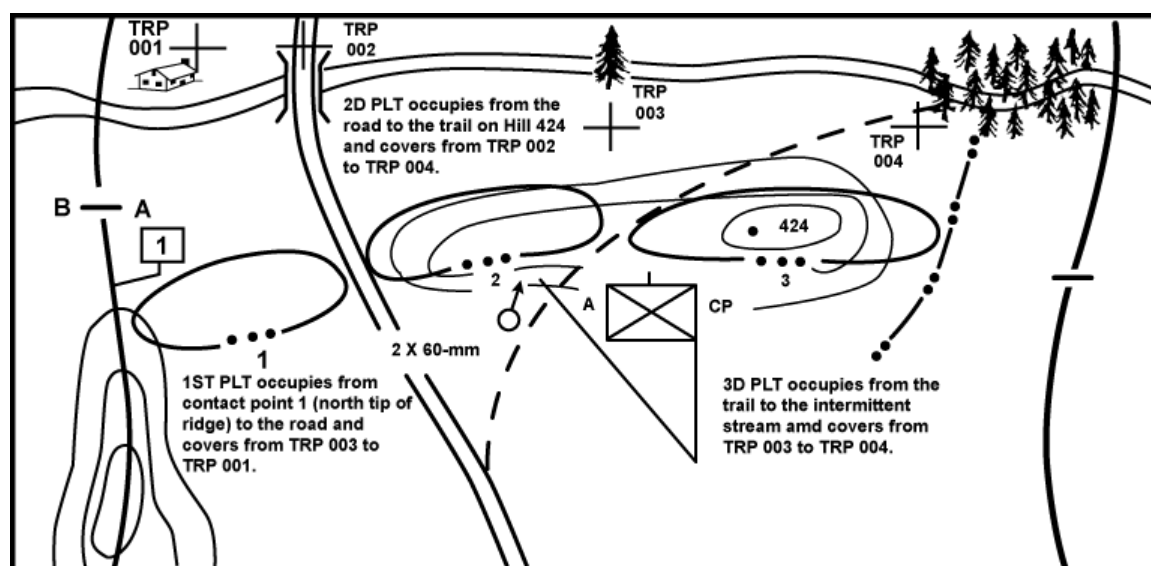


Figure 4-15. Terrain feature method.

e. A priority of fires is set for the company to resolve conflicts in the event two units call for fire at the same time. A different priority may be set for each supporting indirect

system. For example, priority for artillery fires is: 1st PLT, 2d PLT, 3d PLT; priority for mortar fires is 2d PLT, 1st PLT, 3d PLT.

f. Priority targets ensure that critical targets are the first priority for engagement. When allocated a priority target from battalion, the CO may either decide which target(s) will be designated priority targets or he allocates this resource to one of his platoons for planning. Normally in the offense, the CO designates priority targets. They are shifted during the conduct of the operation to provide responsive fires on the critical targets for each phase of the attack. He also assigns responsibility for observing and calling for each priority target. The firing unit should know when priority targets will shift so that by monitoring the command net, they can shift to the next priority target when required.

g. The suppression of the enemy weapon systems on the objective during the assault is normally the most critical aspect of the company fire planning. The CO must decide (if not directed by battalion) when (or if) to initiate the indirect fires on the objective. If the company is detected, these fires may have to begin earlier than planned. He must also decide when to shift the indirect fires to prevent friendly casualties. This will depend on the gun-target line, the accuracy of the firing system, the bursting radius of the round, and the ability of the direct-fire weapons to suppress the enemy. Generally, CAS or artillery will have to be shifted earlier than 81-mm or 60-mm mortars. See Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion for employing indirect fire near friendly forces.

h. The firing locations for the company mortars are selected during the fire planning. Considerations include their maximum effective range, the desired gun-target line, the plan to move the mortar ammunition, and the control and security requirements.

(1) If the mortars can support the attack from their present location or from a position near the LD, this would reduce the ammunition transportation problem. Or they may be able to support from the ORP. Advantages from this location are that although the ammunition had to be carried forward, it did not require extra movement to get it to the firing position, and the personnel securing the ORP would also provide security for the mortars. Disadvantages include, the ORP location may be compromised due to the mortar firing, and the mortars will probably have to fire by using an FDC instead of in the direct lay or direct alignment mode.

(2) Another option is to collocate the mortars with the support element. This requires extra movement of the ammunition, but the control and security of the mortars is better from this location. It is also more likely that they can employ direct lay since the support position has line of sight to the objective.

i. The CO ensures that the fire plan for the company is supported with the proper control measures. Responsibilities must be clearly understood. Visual signals should be established to communicate critical actions, such as to initiate, cease, or shift indirect fires.

j. CAS, attack helicopters, and air defense weapons may provide additional fire support. This support is normally planned and controlled by the battalion, but the CO may request it.

Section V. TTACK TECHNIQUES

The assault on an enemy strongpoint and a limited visibility attack are the two most demanding attacks a rifle company will conduct. The fundamentals and techniques discussed in this section will assist the CO in planning, preparing, and conducting all attacks.

4-18. ASSAULT OF A STRONGPOINT

The most difficult objective for a dismounted force is to seize/clear an enemy strongpoint complete with obstacles and fortifications. The CO employs techniques that avoid attacking the enemy's main strength; instead he tries to identify and attack a weakness in the defense. The CO deceives the enemy as to the point of the main attack; he uses surprise to take advantage of his initiative in determining the time and place for the attack. He attempts to use the indirect approach to strike the enemy on exposed flanks or the rear. The concept development process discussed in paragraph 4-13 provides the specific sub-unit missions and details for planning this attack. A deliberate attack of a strongpoint is usually conducted in the following phases:

- Reconnoiter the objective and develop the concept.
- Move to the objective.
- Isolate the objective and the selected breach site.
- Attack to secure a foothold.
- Exploit the penetration and clear the objective.

a. **Reconnoiter and Develop the Concept.** The CO either recons the objective himself or has someone else do it. The recon should identify the positions on the objective (crew-served weapons, C2 locations, vehicles), the level of preparation, the gaps in the defense, and other potential weaknesses. The recon should be followed by keeping eyes on the objective to ensure the CO is informed of any change in the enemy situation.

(1) The reconnaissance may be done many different ways. An effective technique is to task-organize a reconnaissance patrol with leaders from the assault, support, and breach elements. There should be sufficient personnel to establish surveillance on the objective and to secure the ORP. The reconnaissance patrol either returns to the company's location or meets the company at a designated linkup point and guides them into the ORP. At times, the scout platoon or other battalion assets may be tasked to conduct reconnaissance in support of the company's mission.

(2) After the CO develops his concept, he often task-organizes his unit into a breach element, a support element, an assault element, and possibly a reserve. The reserve is normally under his control and is positioned where it can best exploit the success of the attack or can increase combat power as necessary. The reserve should not be so close that it loses flexibility during the assault. The reserve leader must know where he will locate throughout the attack.

(3) The breach force is usually formed around an infantry unit. Engineers, if available, are part of the breaching element. Any mechanical or explosive breaching assets are also attached to this element. The breach force makes the initial breach and passes the assault element through. It may have to organize its own assault element (to secure the breach), support element (to provide close-in suppression), and breach element (to actually breach the obstacles).

(4) The support element is organized to provide supporting (indirect/direct) fires to the breach element initially, then to the assault element. The support element may consist of infantry squads, the 60-mm mortar section, antiarmor section, machine gun teams, and M203 gunners. Their primary responsibility is to suppress the enemy that can engage the breach element, and to isolate the breach site from enemy reinforcement.

(5) The assault element is usually one or two infantry platoons, depending on the enemy situation (number of personnel, level of preparation and complexity of fortifications), and the size and composition of the breach and the support elements. Often, a small assault element supported by a large volume of accurate suppressive fires is effective in clearing the objective. The assault element may also be required to breach enemy obstacles on the objective.

(6) The CO determines the best task organization for the entire mission. It should be simple and maintain unit integrity whenever possible. At times, the company will move to the ORP task—organized as usual (no cross attachments); change task organization in the ORP for the conduct of the assault, and then modify this task organization to consolidate in defensive positions on the objective.

b. **Move to the Objective.** The company approaches the objective in a manner which supports its deployment prior to the assault. This may be a movement intended to avoid detection that allows the company to occupy the ORP and conduct the leader's reconnaissance of the objective. Or the company may cross the LD under the cover of heavy suppressive direct and indirect fires. These fires would continue until the company reaches its assault position or FCL, and then shift to allow the assault on the objective. In either case, the following fundamentals should be part of this phase of the attack (Figure 4-16).

(1) The movement from the assembly area to the LD is timed so the movement to and across the LD is continuous. The lead element of the company starts crossing the LD at the attack time specified in the battalion OPORD. Before the company's movement, a patrol may be sent to reconnoiter and mark the route and check the time it takes to move to the LD.

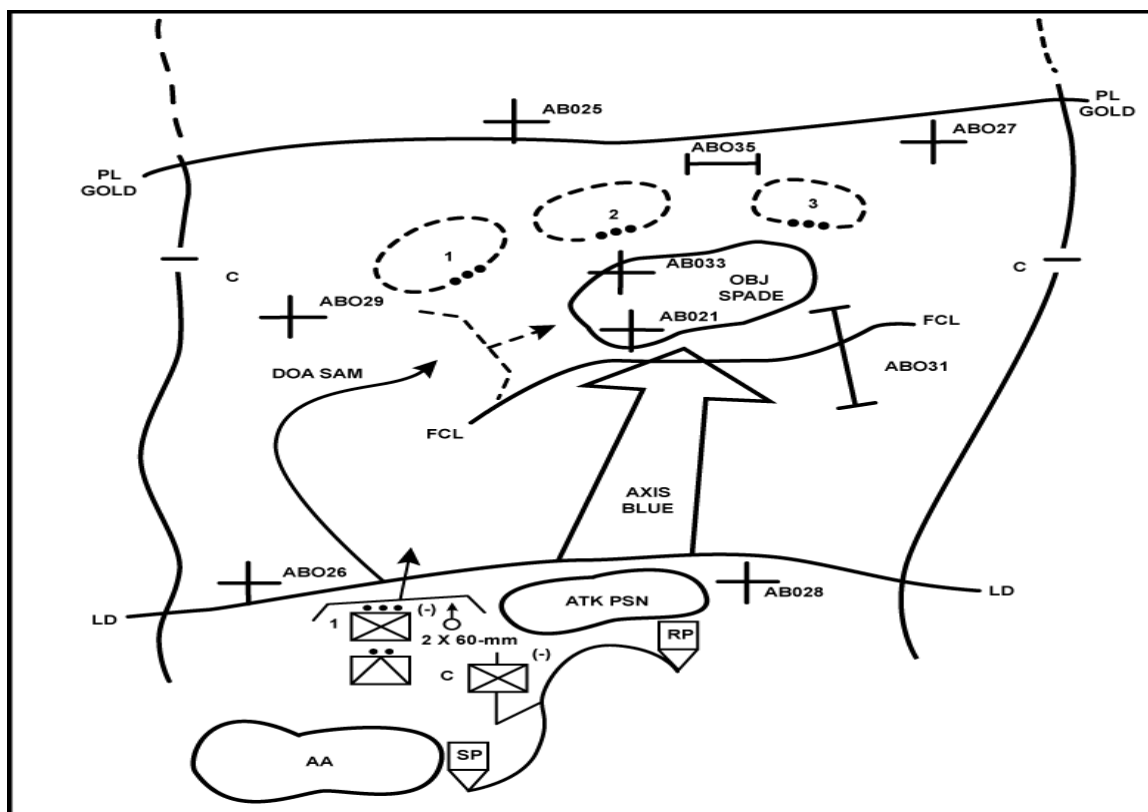


Figure 4-16. Movement to the objective.

(2) The support element may precede the assault and the breach elements to the LD in order to be in an overwatch position ready to fire when they cross the LD. Mortars are moved forward to a firing position near the LD to allow maximum coverage of the objective area.

(3) The CO avoids stopping in the attack position, but if they are ahead of schedule or told to hold in the attack position, they occupy the attack position, post security, and wait until it is time to move or until told to move.

(4) During movement from the LD to the assault position, the company makes the best use of cover, concealment, smoke, and supporting fire. The antiarmor section can overwatch from positions that best support the advance of the company. As the company advances, the antiarmor section leader displaces to ensure continuous support.

(5) If the company is hit by indirect fire en route, it moves quickly out of the impact area. If it meets enemy resistance short of the objective, it returns fire at once. The leader of the platoon in contact has his FO call for and adjust indirect fire on the enemy. Depending on the place and type of resistance and the company plan, the platoon may be ordered to bypass an enemy position that cannot affect the mission. The locations of all bypassed enemy are reported to the CO who, in turn, reports them to the battalion.

(6) If an enemy position cannot be bypassed, the leader of the platoon in contact and the CO must take prompt and aggressive action. The platoon leader attempts to conduct the platoon attack drill and destroy the enemy position. The CO quickly conducts an estimate of the situation and issues FRAGOs as needed to carry out his plan. He should not commit platoons piecemeal. He coordinates actions and fires so the company will attack the enemy with its full combat power. The CO should maneuver to assault the

flank or rear of the enemy position. When the enemy is destroyed/suppressed, the company continues toward its objective.

(7) Obstacles along the route are either bypassed or breached. The CO must decide the best way to overcome the obstacle without losing momentum. The battalion commander is told of obstacles that may affect units following the company. Engineers are positioned forward to provide a rapid assessment of the obstacle.

(8) If a support element (from the company) is to be used, it should be positioned before the company's assault element reaches the assault position. The support element initiates its fire on the objective on order or at a specified time. Supporting indirect fires are synchronized to impact at the same time.

c. **Isolate the Objective and the Selected Breach Site.** Normally, the battalion isolates the objective area to allow the company(s) to concentrate its combat potential on the enemy strongpoint (Figure 4-17).

(1) The company may begin the isolation during the leader's reconnaissance by positioning security elements to prevent enemy movement into or out of the objective area. The CO must ensure that these units understand what actions to take. They may initially just observe and report until the company is deployed for the assault. At a designated time or signal, they begin active measures to isolate the objective.

(2) Once the isolation of the objective area is complete, the CO focuses on isolation at the breach point or point of attack. This isolation is to prevent enemy reinforcement at the breach site and also to suppress enemy weapons and positions that have observation of the breach site. The support element is assigned the main responsibility for this isolation.

(3) The CO masses all available combat power at the initial penetration or breach point. He uses indirect fires to suppress/obscure adjacent enemy positions and isolate them from the breach site.

d. **Attack to Secure a Foothold.** The breach of the enemy position is normally the company's initial main effort. The breach element penetrates or bypasses the enemy's protective obstacles, gains a foothold in the trench line, and creates a gap large enough for the assault element to pass through (Figure 4-18).

(1) *Preparations.* Whenever a unit is conducting a breach, it must be prepared to execute the following steps:

(a) Suppress the enemy covering the obstacle/breach site.

(b) Obscure the enemy's observation of the breach element with smoke.

(c) Secure the far side of the breach by seizing the terrain or destroying the enemy that can engage the breach site.

(d) Reduce the obstacle and or widen and mark the lane, and assist passage of the assault elements.

(2) *Planning.* In planning the breach operation, the following should be considered:

(a) The breach element moves forward by covered and concealed routes. If possible, the breach should be covert to reduce the time the breach and assault elements are exposed to enemy fire. If this is not possible or if the breaching attempt is compromised, the breach element moves under the suppressive fires of the support element.

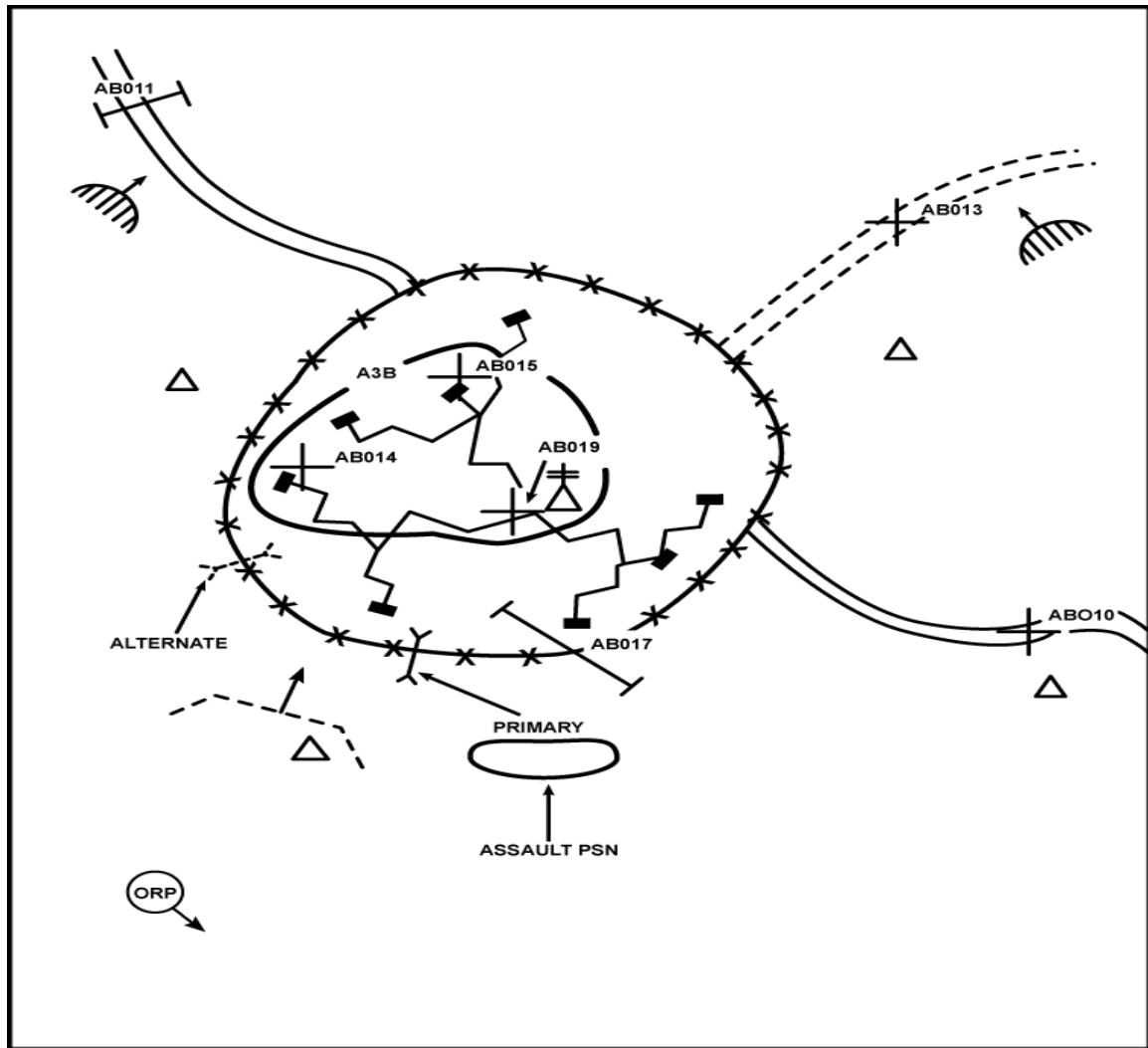


Figure 4-17. Isolation activities.

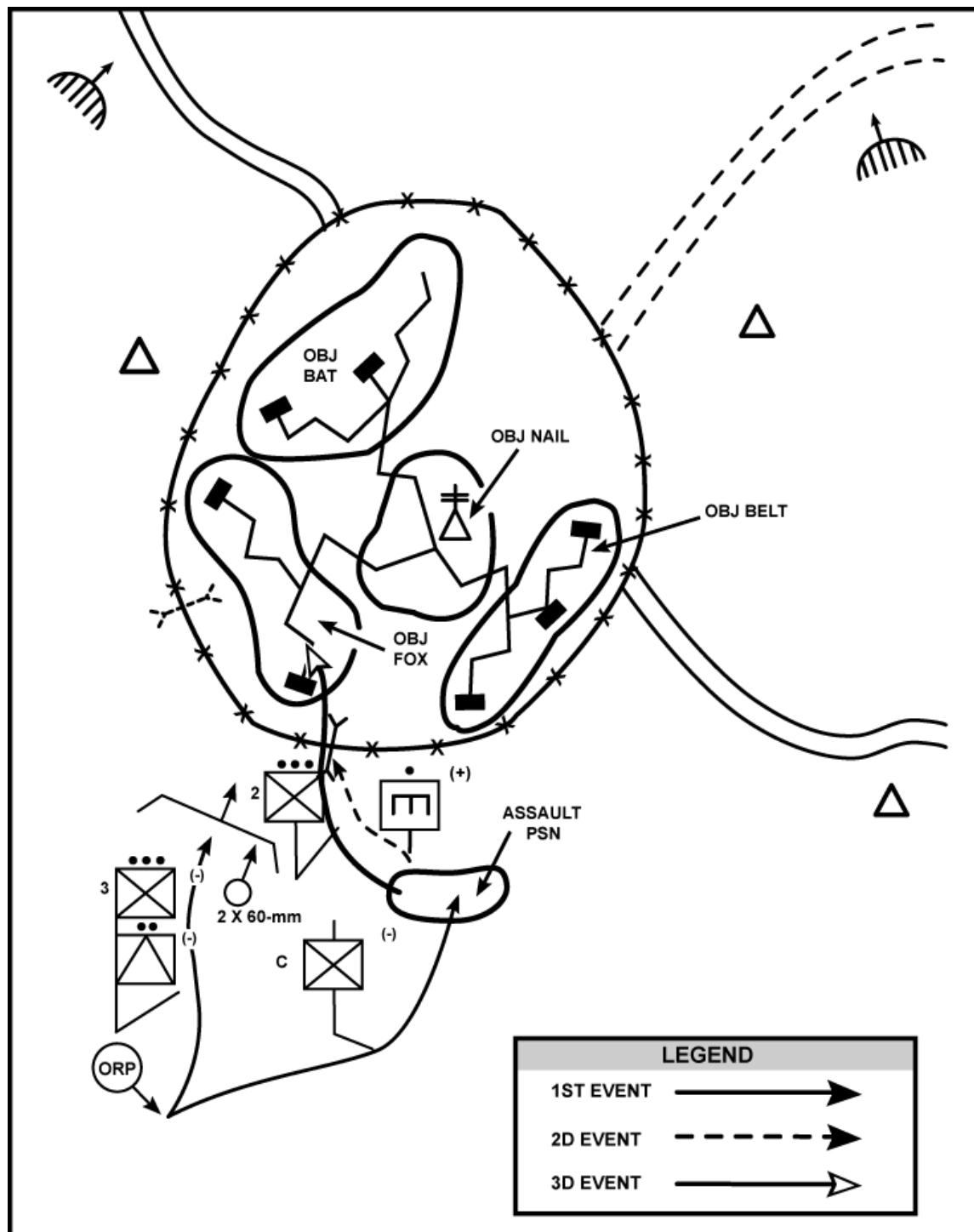


Figure 4-18. Breach and secure a foothold.

(b) The penetration of the enemy position is made on a narrow front. The concept is to make a narrow penetration into the enemy defenses and then expand it enough to allow rapid passage of the assault element. Normally, the company concentrates all combat power at one breach point. Two breach sites may be used if they are mutually supporting and do not result in a lack of concentration or a piece-meal assault. When only using one

breach site, an alternate site should be planned as a contingency if the primary breach is unsuccessful.

(c) The support element provides effective suppression for the breach and assault element to cross the enemy's killing ground. Each weapon in the support element should be assigned a specific enemy position or sector of responsibility. Initially, the support element establishes fire superiority with a maximum volume of fire. Once established, fire superiority is maintained throughout the attack. When indirect fires are shifted, the support element increases the rate of direct fire to maintain the suppression.

(d) The support element normally occupies one position to simplify control. At times, the support element must occupy several positions to provide effective suppression of the enemy. This may be required to prevent the masking of fires by the breach/assault element or because of the characteristics of the supporting weapons (that is, 60-mm mortar versus LAW). Also, the support element often must reposition once the assault element begins clearing the objective. They may follow the assault element through the breach or reposition outside the enemy position.

e. **Exploit the Penetration and Seize the Decisive Point.** After the successful breach, the assault element conducts the main attack. The assault element passes rapidly through the breach, supported by the fires of the support element and the breach element. In planning the assault, consider the following points:

(1) The assault element must reduce the enemy position as quickly as possible. If the assault element can capture or destroy the enemy command and control facilities or other key positions/weapons, the enemy may surrender or abandon the position. If there is key terrain, this may be the decisive point for the assault element. Normally the assault element moves within the enemy's trenches to avoid exposure to enemy fire (Figure 4-19).

(a) The assault element must also organize into support, assault, and breach elements. As subsequent positions or bunkers are encountered, the breaching operations may have to be repeated. As in the initial breach, a support by fire position is established as the same sequence of breaching and assaulting is conducted to reduce the position.

(b) The designation of a reserve allows the CO to retain flexibility during the attack. The CO should be prepared to commit his reserve to exploit success and to continue the attack. The reserve may also be used to repulse counterattacks during consolidation and reorganization.

(2) Once an assault starts, the company maneuvers aggressively to allow the enemy less time to react. The CO monitors the situation. He adjusts the plan to exploit a weakness found during the attack. If a situation develops that is beyond the capability of his company, he notifies the battalion commander. He may have to hold his position until other companies can maneuver to support him.

(3) In moving from their assault positions, platoons advance in the formation most suitable to the terrain and situation. When the assault element must move through a narrow lane in the obstacles, they maintain dispersion and assault through the lane by fire teams; signals should be coordinated to support this. The CO moves where he can best control his platoons and supporting fire. Indirect fire and the direct fires of the support element are shifted or lifted when they endanger the advancing soldiers.

(4) The assaulting soldiers clear enemy positions, secure and search prisoners, and move quickly across the objective. When they reach the far side, they take up hasty

fighting positions and continue to fire at the withdrawing enemy. When the objective is secured, the fire element, mortars, TOWs, and trains are called forward.

Once the objective is seized, the company reorganizes and consolidates if required. The CO decides if he can exploit his success IAW his commander's concept to support the main effort.

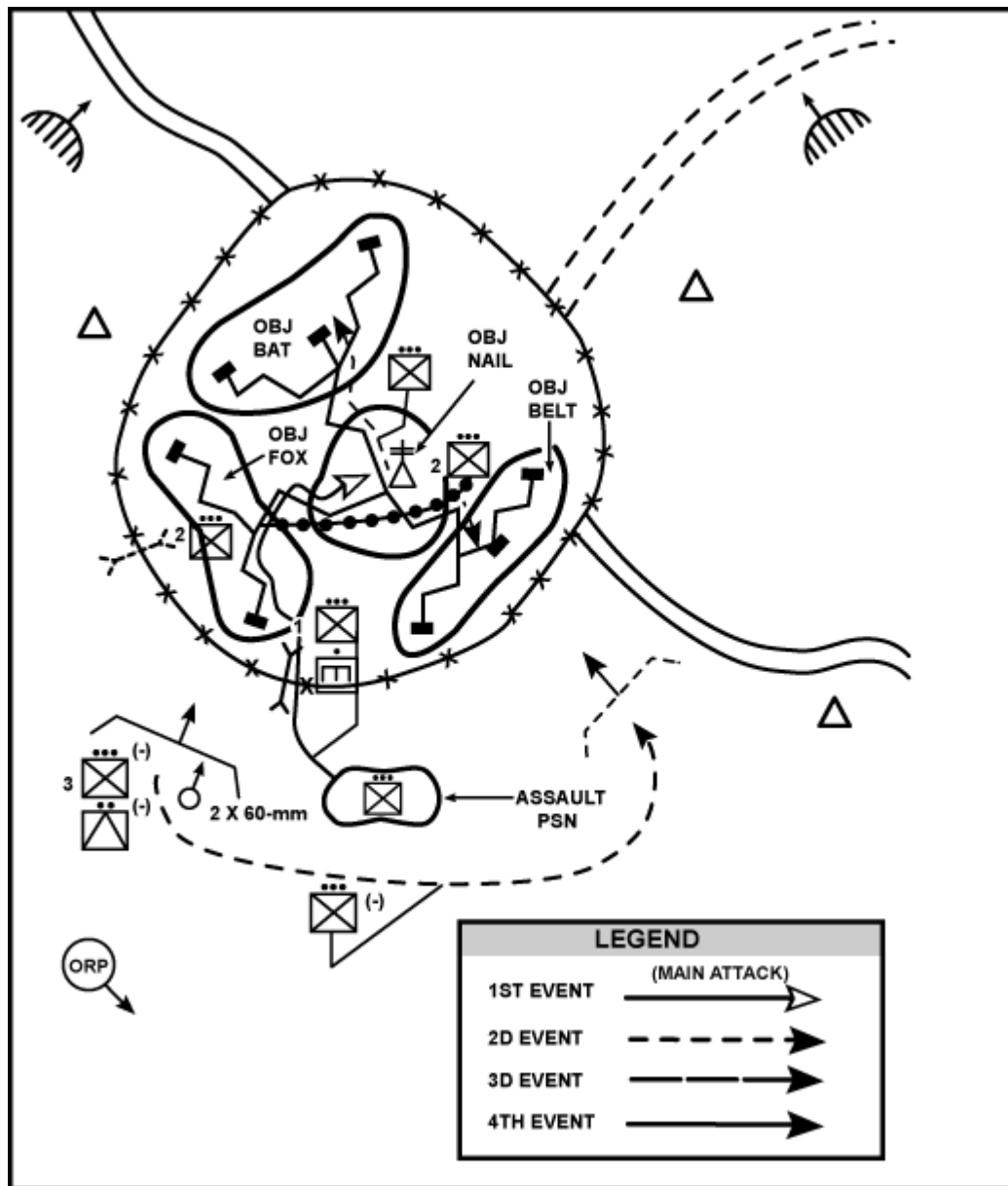


Figure 4-19. Exploit the penetration.

4-19. ATTACK DURING LIMITED VISIBILITY

Successful attacks during limited visibility depend on leadership, reconnaissance, training, planning, and surprise. Although these fundamentals are also key to daylight attacks, attacks during limited visibility require certain considerations and the proper application of the techniques discussed in this chapter to ensure control in the attack. Darkness, fog, heavy rain, and falling snow limit visibility. Smoke and dust from HE fires do too, but their effects are more temporary. Infantry companies attack during limited visibility—

- To achieve surprise.
 - To avoid heavy losses.
 - To cause panic in a weak/disorganized enemy.
 - To exploit success and maintain momentum.
 - To keep pressure on the enemy.
- a. The rifle company, when equipped with NVDs, conducts limited visibility attacks very much like daylight attacks (Figure 4-20). The fundamentals for a daylight attack, discussed earlier in this chapter, still apply for night attacks. To conduct attacks in this manner requires—
- A company that is well trained in limited visibility attacks.
 - Enough natural light to employ the unit's NVDs.
 - A simple, effective concept that takes advantage of the enemy's surprise and confusion.
 - A successful reconnaissance of the objective area.
 - Additional control measures/techniques, as needed.
- b. When planning attacks at night, the CO must consider the increased difficulty with—
- Controlling units, soldiers, and fires.
 - Identifying and engaging targets.
 - Navigating and moving.
 - Identifying friendly from enemy soldiers.
 - Locating, treating, and evacuating casualties.
 - Locating and by-passing or breaching enemy obstacles.
- c. In planning limited visibility attacks, the CO should also consider the following:
- (1) Feints and other deceptions may be more effective. (This is true for the enemy also. False positions/other deceptive measures may be more effective.)
 - (2) If a small element can infiltrate the enemy position, it can be extremely effective in supporting the main attack. Or it may covertly breach obstacles or neutralize key positions/weapons to allow the main attack to quickly seize a foothold.
 - (3) It may be possible to actually infiltrate the main attack inside the enemy's positions and then fight from the inside to the outside. In this case, the unit inside the position may be able to occupy defensive positions and force the enemy to attack him.
- d. There are two basic decisions to be made for conducting limited visibility attacks—whether to illuminate the objective, and whether to use indirect fires to support the attack.
- (1) The infantry company normally conducts nonilluminated attacks to exploit its technological and training advantage. However, illumination is normally planned for every attack at night so that it is readily available if the enemy detects the attack and uses

illumination, or if he possesses NVDs. Illumination may also be effective after the objective is secure to support the reorganization and consolidation, particularly the casualty evacuation.

(2) The infantry company conducts illuminated night attacks like a daylight attack. Illumination is available from artillery, mortars, M203s, and hand-fired and aircraft flares. Permission to fire illumination is often retained by battalion because the light may affect adjacent unit operations also. The illumination rounds may be fired to impact on the ground, providing both light and markings on the objective to orient on. They may also be placed behind the objective and in the air causing the enemy to be silhouetted. Once illumination is begun, it should be continued until the objective is secured. Sufficient ammunition must be available.

(3) Nonilluminated, nonsupported attacks offer the best chance of gaining surprise. There are several techniques for conducting these types of attacks. For highly trained units possessing modern NVDs, they are conducted like daylight attacks. For infantry units that do not have NVDs, a linear assault is one technique (Paragraph 4-19k). Another option is to infiltrate close to the enemy and then assault under illumination.

(4) Illuminated, supported attacks are almost like daylight attacks. These may be most effective when speed is essential, when there is limited time for reconnaissance, or when the enemy is weak/disorganized. When conducting these types of attacks, the attacking unit still attempts to use stealth and the concealment of limited visibility to gain surprise. Then they initiate illumination/fires to support the assault. For the H-series units, this may be the preferred option.

e. Reconnaissance is critical in every attack, but especially for attacks at night. It should be conducted during daylight down to the lowest level possible. Each unit should reconnoiter the routes that they will move on, the positions that they will occupy, and the objective that they are assigned. The need for detailed information about the enemy must be balanced against the risk of being detected and the loss of surprise.

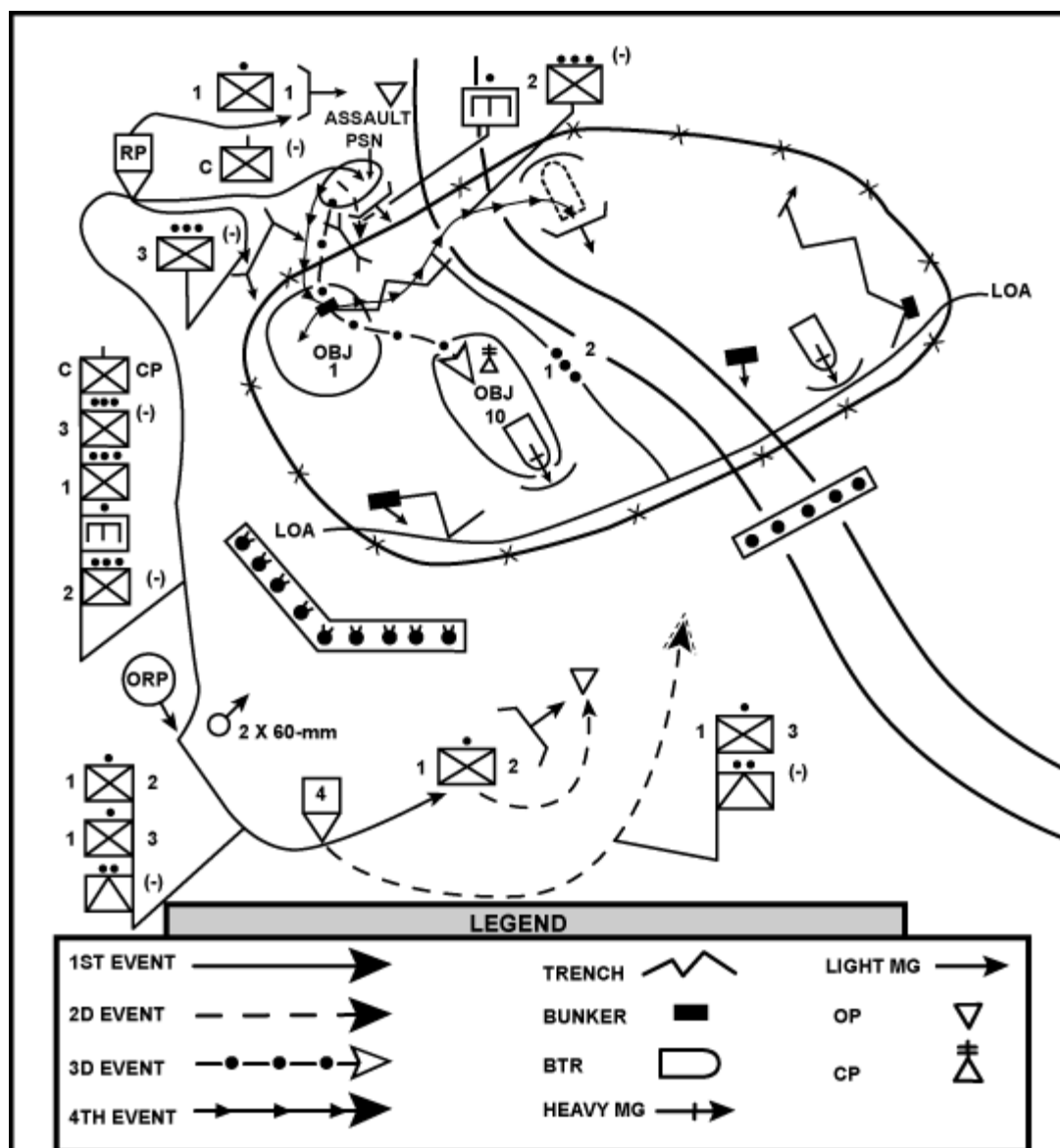


Figure 4-20. Limited visibility attack with NVDs.

(1) The reconnaissance plan should also establish surveillance on the objective in case the enemy repositions units/weapons or prepares additional obstacles. Surveillance/security elements should also secure critical locations such as assault and support positions, the LD/PLD, and key routes and RPs to protect the company from enemy ambushes/spoiling attacks. These security forces may become part of the isolation element during the attack.

(2) When reconnaissance is not successful due to lack of time, failure to identify critical aspects of the enemy's position, detection by the enemy, or any other reason, the commander should request a delay in the attack time to allow for further reconnaissance. If this is not possible, an illuminated/supported attack should be considered. A night attack with marginal information of the enemy's defense is very risky and difficult to conduct successfully.

f. A simple concept, particularly for the actions on the objective, also supports control during the assault. Platoon/squad objectives should be smaller and easily identified if possible.

(1) Avoid developing a concept that requires the company to fight for each enemy fighting position. Just as in a daylight attack, a decisive point must be identified and combat power focused at this location. Once the decisive action is accomplished, the plan must also address any remaining enemy. If required by the higher commander's concept or for an effective consolidation, all enemy may have to be cleared from the objective area.

(2) A smaller assault element maneuvering on the objective is also easier to control and less likely to suffer casualties from either friendly or enemy fires. The assault element must have clear signals to ensure control of all supporting fires, both direct and indirect.

(3) If a nonilluminated attack was planned but illumination is fired during execution due to detection by the enemy or the use of illumination by an adjacent unit, the concept should be flexible to allow adjustments to a daylight attack. This is a major problem for a unit that planned to conduct a modified linear assault attack and is forced to conduct an illuminated attack. A contingency plan that reorients this attack similar to a daylight attack should be prepared and issued. Every soldier should know under what conditions this plan is executed. In some cases (when already deployed through the PLD and advancing on the enemy for example), the company may have no choice but to continue the attack as planned or attempt to disengage.

g. Fire control techniques for limited visibility include—

(1) Using tracer fire.

(a) Leaders in the assault element fire all tracers; their men fire where the leader's tracers impact.

(b) The support element positions an automatic weapon on a tripod on the flank nearest the assault element. This weapon fires a burst of tracers every 15 seconds to indicate the near limit of the supporting fires. All other weapons in the support element keep their fires on the side of this trace away from the assault element. The assault element signals to shift fires to the next position or to a set distance. If required, these rounds can be adjusted well over the head of the assault element to preclude casualties.

(2) Marking with luminous tape or chemical lights.

(a) Mark the assault personnel to prevent fratricide. Do this in a way that avoids enemy detection, such as tape on the back of the helmet or small infrared chemical lights (if the enemy has no NVDs).

(b) The support element should know where the lead assault element is. If the individual soldier markings do not suffice, use a large chemical light (IR or visible). Place these on the ground or throw them in front of the assault element. When clearing a trench line, put the lights on a stick and move them with the lead element.

(3) Assigning weapon control restrictions to reduce the risk to the assault element. These may include:

- The platoon on the right in the assault might be given weapons free to the right flank, because there are no friendly soldiers there, but weapons tight or hold on the left because another friendly unit is located there.
- Only shotguns and pistols will be used by the assault element.

- No automatic weapons fire by the assault element on the objective. This ensures that all automatic weapons are enemy.
- (4) Using the following other techniques to increase control during the assault:
 - Not allowing flares, grenades, or smoke on the objective.
 - Only allowing certain personnel with NVDs to engage targets on the objective.
 - A magnetic azimuth for maintaining direction.
 - Mortar or artillery rounds to orient attacking units.
 - The use of guides.
 - Reduced intervals between soldiers and units.

h. Mortar, artillery, and antiarmor fires are planned as in a daylight attack. They do not fire, however, unless the company is detected or until the company is ready to assault. Some weapons may fire before the attack and maintain a pattern to deceive the enemy or to help cover noise made by the company's movement. This will not be done if it discloses the attack.

(1) Indirect fire is hard to adjust when visibility is poor. If doubt exists as to the exact friendly locations, indirect fire is directed first at enemy positions beyond the objective, and then walked onto the objective. Illuminating rounds, fired to burn on the ground, can be used to mark objectives. This helps the company orient on the objective but also may adversely affect NVDs.

(2) Smoke is planned to further reduce the enemy's visibility, particularly if he has night vision devices. The smoke is laid close to or on enemy positions so as not to restrict friendly movement or hinder the breaching of obstacles. Employing smoke on the objective during the assault may make it hard for assaulting soldiers to find enemy fighting positions. If sufficient thermal sights are available, using smoke on the objective may provide a decisive advantage for a well-trained unit.

(3) Illumination is always planned for attacks to be conducted in limited visibility. That gives the commander the option of calling for it. The battalion commander normally controls illumination, but may authorize the CO to call for it, when needed. If the commander decides to use illumination, it should not be called for until the assault is initiated or the attack is detected. It should be placed on several locations over a wide area to confuse the enemy as to the exact place of the attack. It should also be placed beyond the objective to help assaulting soldiers see and fire at withdrawing or counterattacking enemy soldiers.

(4) Illumination may also be required if the enemy uses illumination to disrupt the effectiveness of the company's NVDs. Once used, illumination must be continuous because attacking soldiers will have temporarily lost their normal night vision. Any break in illumination may also reduce the effectiveness of suppressive fire when the attackers need it most. Care must be taken to ensure that the squad and platoon leaders do not use hand flares before the commander has decided to illuminate the objective.

(5) Thermal sights (TOW/Dragon) may be employed strictly for observation if there are no targets for these weapons to engage. Positioned outside the objective area, these sights can provide critical current information. These sights may also be used to assist the support element in controlling their fires or to provide the assault element reports of enemy movements on the objective.

(6) When limited NVDs are available, they must be prioritized and employed at the most critical locations. These may be with the key soldiers in the breach element, key leaders in the assault element, other members of the assault element, and key leaders/weapons in the support element.

i. When the objective has been seized, the company consolidates and reorganizes. Consolidation and reorganization are the same as for a daylight attack with the following exceptions:

(1) Guides are used to lead trains and support elements forward to their positions.

(2) The consolidation plan should be as simple as possible. Avoid changes in task organization.

(3) Locating and evacuating casualties and EPWs takes longer. They may have to be moved to the rear of the objective and kept there until visibility improves.

(4) Platoon positions are closer together to ease control and improve mutual support. Position distances are adjusted as visibility improves.

j. The modified linear assault is a technique for conducting a nonilluminated attack without NVDs to seize an occupied objective. This technique is effective in controlling the fires of the assault element by maintaining a linear formation. Each soldier assaults using individual movement techniques, while remaining generally "on line" with the soldier on his right and left. Each soldier is able to engage/suppress targets to his front with fewer restrictions because there is less chance of fratricide.

(1) In the true linear assault, the company would deploy through their respective squad release points and the entire company conducts a linear assault across the objective (Figure 4-21). This technique is normally modified to reduce the vulnerability of the assault element. This technique may be modified in a number of ways depending on the situation.

(a) The most effective modification is to establish part of the company in a support by fire position. The remainder of the company deploys at the PLD and conducts the assault (Figure 4-22). The machine guns, mortars, and Dragons are normally most effective employed in this role. M203s may also be effective if sufficient visibility exists for their employment. It is essential that the flank of the assault element nearest the support element be visible to the support element. The fire team on this flank may mark themselves with chemical lights or glint tape to ensure they are visible.

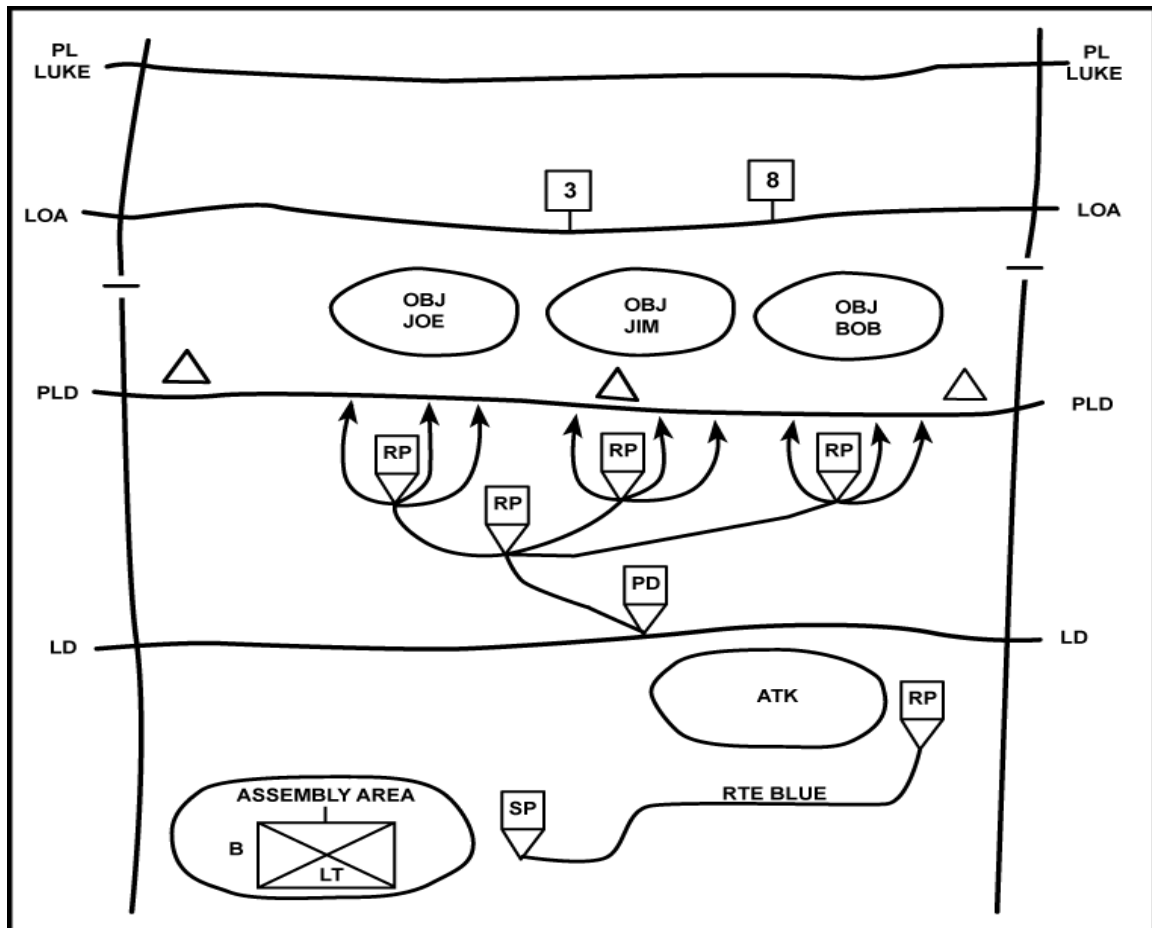


Figure 4-21. Linear assault.

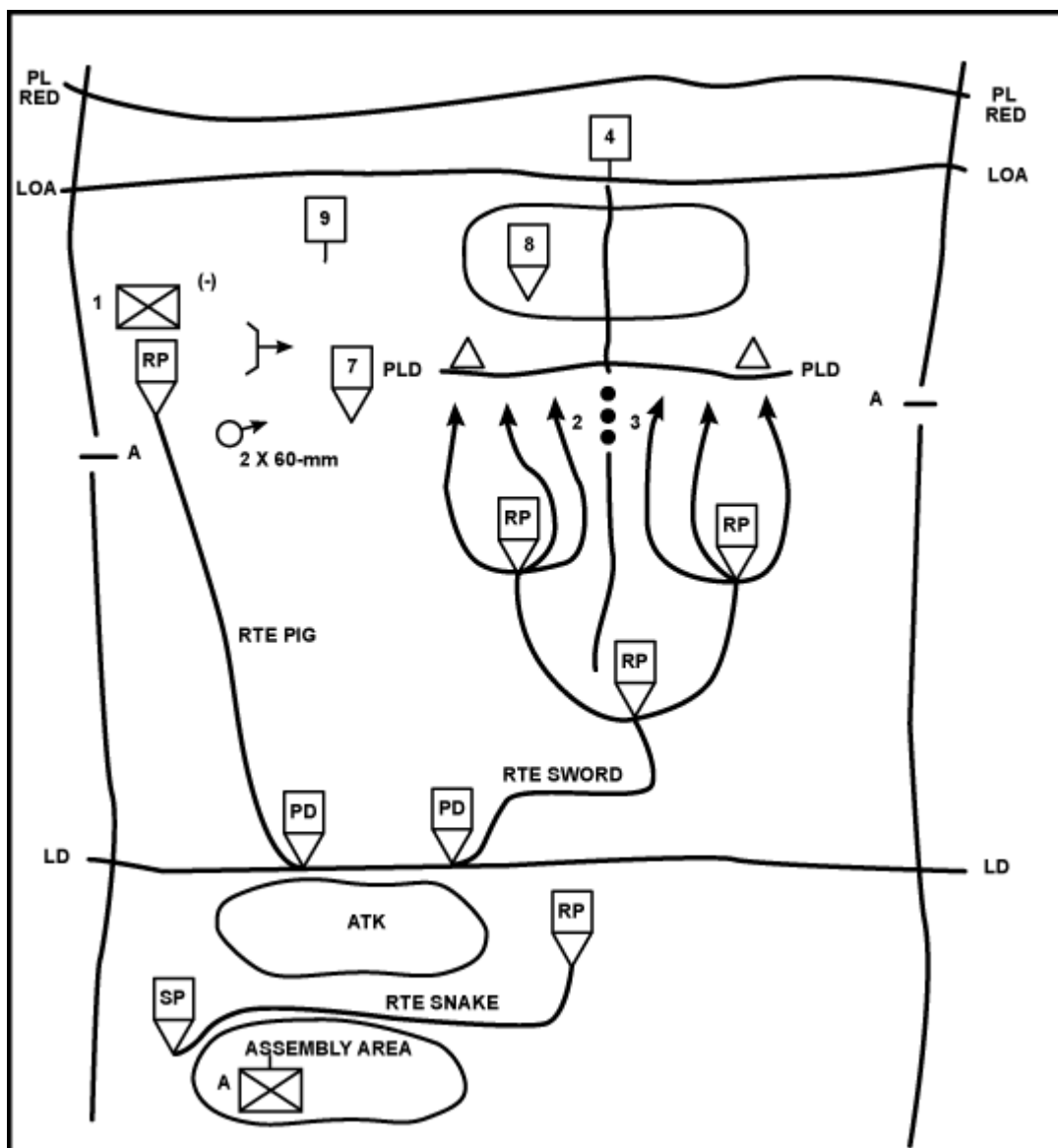


Figure 4-22. Linear assault with support element.

(b) Other variations of this technique may include attacking on a much narrower front with a smaller assault element and having a large follow-and-support element. For example, instead of two platoons deploying at the PLD, a platoon (-) could deploy against an identified enemy weakpoint (Figure 4-23). They could be tasked to bypass enemy positions to quickly seize or destroy a critical location/facility and the follow-and-support force reduces bypassed positions. Or, the assault element may be assigned a shallow objective to support the forward passage of the trailing unit. Another option is to deploy through the platoon release points and then to attack in squad files. This technique is most effective when the situation will support an infiltration through the enemy defenses to seize decisive terrain or positions to the rear.

(2) The modified linear assault also simplifies the control of supporting fires from outside the objective. By establishing support positions perpendicular to the direction of

assault, the supporting fires can be employed next to the assault element and then shifted in front of them as they advance.

(3) The linear formation during the assault is also the biggest weakness with this technique. If the enemy is in well-prepared defensive positions, the linear formation ensures at least part of the assault element attacks through the enemy's kill zones. Also, assaulting using this technique makes it very difficult for the leader to concentrate combat power against an identified enemy weakness. Finally, if the enemy has NVDs or the assault element runs into unidentified obstacles after deploying at the PLD, fire superiority may not be achieved and the assault will rapidly come to a halt. This may result in the majority of the company being decisively engaged in the enemy killing ground.

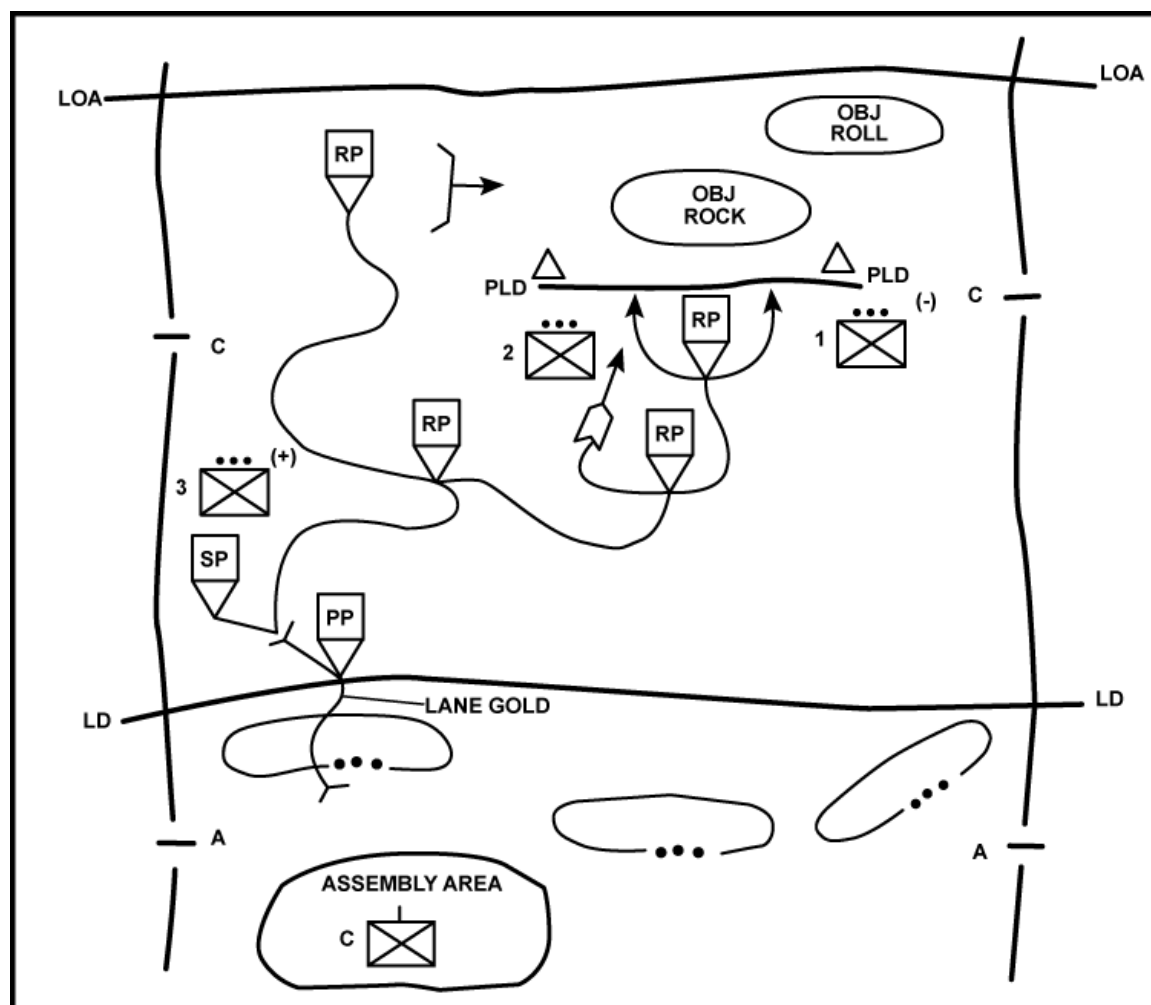


Figure 4-23. Linear assault with follow and support.

(4) Although there are significant difficulties with this technique, it remains a viable technique for the units without NVDs to attack during limited visibility. It is most effective against a weak or disorganized enemy. If the enemy has NVDs or a well-prepared defense with protective obstacles, this technique should not be used. An

illuminated, supported attack conducted as a daylight attack may be the most effective option in this situation.

(5) Before attacking in this manner, the company should secure the PLD and provide guides for the company from the LD to the PLD. Each platoon provides personnel to secure their portion of the PLD and to guide the platoon from the platoon RP.

(6) These soldiers are briefed on the routes from the LD to the platoon RP, actions on enemy contact, time of departure, and other information needed by the patrol units to conduct their mission.

(7) This element moves forward to the platoon RP. They then move forward to reconnoiter and or mark the platoon routes, secure their respective parts of the PLD, and observe the objective. The platoon guides come back to the platoon RP to guide their platoons to the squad RP and to the PLD.

(8) Once the company crosses the LD, movement to the PLD is continuous. They move slowly to maintain stealth. Platoons are released at the platoon RP so they can deploy before reaching the PLD. Once their units are deployed, the platoon leaders and the support element leader notify the CO. When the company is fully deployed, the CO informs the battalion commander. On the battalion commander's order, the company moves silently forward from the PLD. The platoons guide on the base platoon.

(9) Wire is a means of maintaining communications during the attack for those units with the equipment and wire available (H-series units). The wire net should link the squad leaders, platoon leaders, and the company commander. If possible, a security patrol should lay the wire before the attack. If not, the wire can be laid as the company moves. This allows the company to use wire communications throughout the movement. The laying of wire before an attack could cause the attack to be discovered by the enemy if the wire is not properly hidden, or if it is laid too far in advance.

(a) Company net. Wire is laid from the company's AA or the company RP designated by battalion to the platoon RP, and from there to the squad RPs.

(b) Platoon net. Wire is laid from the squad RP to each squad leader's position on the PLD.

(c) Assault wire. Assault wire can be used as a guide from the company RP to the squad and platoon RPs.

(d) Radios. Squad radios can be used for backup communications.

(10) When the attack is discovered, or on the CO's order, the support element opens fire. On order or when discovered, the platoons assault. Scattered enemy fire must not be taken as a loss of surprise, and it should not be cause to start the assault. Leaders must recognize that this technique for conducting a limited visibility attack results in a linear assault. To be successful, the assault must achieve surprise and rapidly overwhelm the defender. If the initial assault fails, it will be difficult to regain control.

(11) Soldiers assault aggressively using individual movement techniques to maneuver. The support element must quickly gain fire superiority with a heavy volume of fire. Tracers are used to improve accuracy, to control fires, and to allow the assault element to see where its supporting fires are impacting. The FOs call for indirect fire around and beyond the objective to disrupt enemy reinforcement. As the assault closes on the objective, fires are shifted beyond the limit of advance or lifted entirely. Soldiers must not go beyond the limit of advance.

(12) If the enemy discovers the attack before the company reaches the PLD, the CO may—

- Call for planned, supporting fire to suppress the enemy.
- Call for illumination (if authorized by the battalion commander) to ease control and movement.
- Continue as if it were a daylight attack by modifying the attack plan to a daylight attack.

NOTE: A linear assault, even a modified variation, is generally a very risky assault technique when conducted under illumination.

4-20. DECEPTION OPERATIONS

The company may be tasked to conduct a feint or a demonstration as part of a battalion attack. The CO uses the same planning process and troop-leading procedures as he would for any attack.

a. A feint is a limited objective supporting attack that requires the company to make contact with the enemy. Normally this will be direct-fire contact. As in any attack, the purpose that the battalion commander wants to achieve is the CO's primary concern in planning the feint. This purpose is normally stated in terms of some activity by the enemy, such as to cause the enemy—

- To reposition or commit his reserve.
- To shift his supporting fires away from the main attack.
- To reveal his defensive positions.

(1) The CO must make sure he understands the timing of the feint in relation to the main attack. He also considers what he must do if his feint achieves more success than expected. This may result from an unexpected enemy weakness or because the enemy commander fails to react to this attack. In either case, the battalion commander may decide to shift his main effort to support this unexpected success.

(2) The CO also must make sure that this attack is conducted aggressively. This will help achieve the desired reaction by the enemy and also reduce friendly casualties. If the company loses its momentum while under effective fire by the enemy force, the company must either establish a hasty defense or disengage. Either of these actions may result in needless casualties.

b. A demonstration is similar to a feint, but no contact is required with the enemy force. Battalion will normally provide specific actions required as part of the demonstration. For example, the company could be directed to provide a smoke screen using smoke pots, and to simulate preparations for an attack in this area.

4-21. SECURITY OPERATIONS

The battalion may assign the company a security mission, such as to screen or guard another friendly unit or asset. This may be part of the battalion counterreconnaissance mission (FM 7-20). The CO may also assign one of these tasks to his platoons as part of his scheme of maneuver. These tasks require the unit to orient on the friendly force to prevent enemy forces from detecting, observing, and engaging. The CO analyzes the situation and develops his plan as in any tactical situation (Chapter 2). Special considerations include:

a. **Mission.** The task, as defined in FM 101-5-1, determines the specific requirements that the unit must accomplish. A screen task (provide early warning and destroy enemy reconnaissance) is generally easier than to conduct a guard task (same as a screen plus prevent enemy ground observation and direct fire on the friendly force) in the same situation. The unit or asset being protected also significantly affects the plan. For example, if the company is tasked to guard the left flank of the battalion during movement, the CO's concept must consider how to maintain this security while the battalion is moving and dispersed in length.

b. **Terrain.** The terrain analysis will indicate likely enemy approaches, good observation points, and places where risk may be accepted.

c. **Enemy.** The enemy analysis integrated with the terrain analysis should indicate the areas that would provide enemy observation/direct fire on the friendly unit. These likely enemy locations should become the focus of the CO's concept. The expected size and strength of the enemy units will assist the commander in determining his need to be able to concentrate forces, and the size and location of a reserve/reaction force. The effective range of the enemy's direct-fire weapon systems may also assist the commander in determining how far from the friendly force to establish his screen line (if not directed by battalion).

d. **Troops.** The available friendly troops, particularly any attached vehicles or surveillance assets, will obviously affect the CO's planning. If vehicles are available, they may provide improved mobility to the reserve/reaction force. If TOWs or GSRs are attached, they will increase the company's surveillance capability.

e. **Time.** A key concern for the CO is how long the security must be maintained. For an extended period of time, the plan must allow for a part of the force to be conducting sustainment activities such as sleep, resupply, and maintenance. The plan must also address the required adjustments during limited visibility. During daylight, a screen line consisting of OPs supported by platoon reaction forces may be sufficient. During limited visibility, additional OPs would be established and gaps between the OPs would need to be covered by squad-sized patrols.

4-22. RIFLE COMPANY AS THE RESERVE

The company may be held as the battalion reserve during an attack. The battalion commander commits the reserve to decisively influence the action and to maintain the momentum of the attack. To exploit the success of the other attacking companies and to achieve surprise, the reserve should attack the enemy from a new direction. Because of the various missions that the reserve may be assigned, its commander must keep abreast of the tactical situation, know the missions and the tactical plans of the other companies, and be familiar with the terrain and the enemy situation in the objective area. The reserve must act quickly and effectively when committed.

a. The battalion commander may have the reserve company commander with him more during the fight to keep the CO abreast of the situation. This also makes it easier when the battalion commander needs to pass detailed instructions to him.

b. The reserve may be assigned one or more of the following tasks as part of its be-prepared missions.

- Protect the flanks or the rear of the battalion.
- Assume the mission of another company.

- Support by fire.
- Clear a position that has been overrun or bypassed.
- Attack from a new direction.
- Assist during the consolidation on an objective.
- Guard and evacuate prisoners.